

CLASSIC MUSIC NEVER GETS OLD

# DOWN THE LINE



## STEVE HINDALONG

CRAWLING IN AND OUT OF SHADOWS TOWARD THE LIGHT

ISSUE 9 JANUARY 2011  
DOWNTHELINEZINE.COM

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LESLIE DuPRE-GRIMAUD  
JAMEY BOZEMAN  
OJO TALKS RE-ISSUES

DAVID DI SABATINO  
STERLING PART 3  
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## **ACTION SPOTLIGHT**

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### TIME FOR SOMETHING NEW

We are always looking for new ideas and directions at DTL. Not too long from now, be looking out for the new Down The Line podcast called “Basement Tapes”, hosted by Mike Indest of Motonaut. Mike is going to be highlighting bands and artists you might not have heard of, but need to.

Also coming in the near future is an updated website. We are going to feature reviews of music as we get them on the new site – that way bands don’t have to wait a few months to get reviewed. We’ll still publish the reviews in the magazine, but readers of the site will get first view of them.

There are also other ideas being kicked around – but if you have some, let us know! We are always up for good ideas.

<http://www.downthelinezine.com>

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# DOWN THE LINE

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WRITE US Letters and comments need to contain your full name. All submissions become property of Down the Line E-zine and may be edited or condensed. Or even printed out and framed if you really kiss our... um... never mind....

## VISION:

Down the Line covers bands that explored the intersection between faith and art in the 1980s through the early 1990s - even though they were probably never accepted in to what is called "Contemporary Christian Music" because they were too edgy or alternative or liberal or for whatever reason. Some of these bands may still be making music today, and others may have moved on. We cover these bands (active or dormant) as well as any new projects by former members of these bands and any new bands that may have the same spirit as these bands.

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(there would be a whole lot more technical mumbo jumbo in this space if we were more professional. But that would be boring and all...)

# LETTERS TO US

## Yee-Haw!

If you're a fan of Mike Stand and The Altar Boys, you will absolutely want to get this new album of Altar Boys tunes done rockabilly punk style. You'll recognize drummer Chuck Cummings from Dakota Motor Co. and a bunch of other Christian projects from the 1990's as well. I could not be happier that there is a lone voice of morality in the rockabilly punk scene; in fact, they are the only current rockabilly punk group that I will even listen to for that very reason. Check out their ReverbNation page at <http://www.reverbnation.com/altarbilities> for a preview; you won't be disappointed!

—David Gasten  
Producer, "This is Vintage Now" compilation

*(thanks for the tip David – see the review in this issue. And a tip for any fans – you can get the CD for \$5 + shipping from their Facebook page.)*

## So Many Bands, So Little Time

Out of curiosity (and unless I completely missed it) will there ever be an article on Michael Been/The Call?

Alex Strohschein  
FaceBook Comment

*(cool timing on this, as I was just listening to the first vinyl by The Call yesterday. You haven't missed it – but now that you asked... that is a great idea. Anybody out there want to take part in this? We could use some help pulling together resources on this one.)*

## Crazy Is As Crazy Does

The Undercover gets the blame for single handedly stopping all those great traditional concerts at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa every Saturday since 1968. Thousands upon thousands have given their lives to Jesus at these anointed Concerts. One day in the mid 80s Chuck Smith showed up one Saturday night and there was The Undercover Band with their shirts off and jumping around like idiots! U call that ground breaking? Hitler was ground breaking too! Just another "in the flesh, look at me" band that never gave God any Glory, and why are you booking these guys?

Scott Brooklyn

*(this comment came in on our blog, but Steve read it and wanted to respond in his column. So check it out for his response.)*

## Look Us Up Online

Look! We have one of those cool QR Code thingys. Just point your smart phone app at it and pull up some of our sites automatically:



*Have any other questions, comments, theological musings, etc? We would love to hear them – come be our friend on FaceBook or comment on our blog. We also do that Twitter thing occasionally.*

### Intense Millennium

Not only is [Intense Millennium](#) re-issuing older bands – it seems they are now signing newer bands. In recent IM news:

- Pre-orders for *What a Joke* by **Deliverance** and *Destruction Comes* by **Vengeance Rising** are underway. Each pre-order comes with a limited edition guitar pick – but they are selling out fast! March 28th is the official release date for both titles.
- Select releases by **Ransom**, **Sacred Warrior**, **Undercover**, **Vengeance Rising**, and **Bloodgood** are on sale for \$9.99 for a limited time.
- Hard Rock/ metal band **Under Command** have a new album coming out soon.
- Brazilian Symphonic Extreme Metal band **Hawthorn** have a new album scheduled for release in 2011.
- Melodic rockers **Cry Holy** will be releasing a re-mastered/expanded version of *AlienNation*.
- Doom metal-er **David Benson** will re-issue *Holy Psychotherapy* and *Purpose Of The Cross*, both featuring bonus songs and previously unreleased material.
- Re-issues by **The Altar Boys**, **Sacred Warrior**, and **Bloodgood** are still on the horizon.

### Common Bond

In other Intense Millennium Records news, a CD issue of Common Bond's *Heaven is Calling* is coming in 2011. *Heaven is Calling* has never been released on CD. It seems that this will be a part of something called a "new wave pack" – but not sure what that means.

### Lifesavers

The Lifesavers are recording an album and they need your help. The name of the album will be *Dog Days of an Indian Summer* and according to the band:

"13 songs are written, recording has already begun! This album will be classic Lifesavers Surf/Punk, a soundtrack for Summer if you will. Recording will be done by Joshua Lory at his home studio as well as One Way Studio with Masaki Liu, who will more than likely mix it. Mastering will be done by J. Powell at Steinhaus Mastering. The money we raise here will go to studio cost for recording drums, guitar, and mixing, as well as CD pressing. Those that donate

\$15.00 and up will receive a download link sent to their email the day the album is finished mixing as well as a copy of the disc before it hits any stores!"

See their Kickstarter page here:

<http://kck.st/hZErOD>

### Upside Down Room

Pop.Vox.Music announced that punk rockers Upside Down Room are back. Well, they actually never went anywhere, but they now have new music. Out now is a [re-issue](#) of the band's out-of-print ep *TV Baby* with two bonus tracks and redesigned "classic" artwork. Also announced is a new 6 song ep to be released next month. No more details on the new songs other than they were mastered by Jason Martin of Starflyer 59.

### Randy Rose

If you were a fan of the Danzig-inspired doom metal of Rose, you'll be glad to know that they are recording new music. From their bio:

"Rose is back! This next generation of Rose is harder without being pretentious. Recommended if you like Q.O.T.S.A., Sabbath, White Stripes, and The Blue Van."

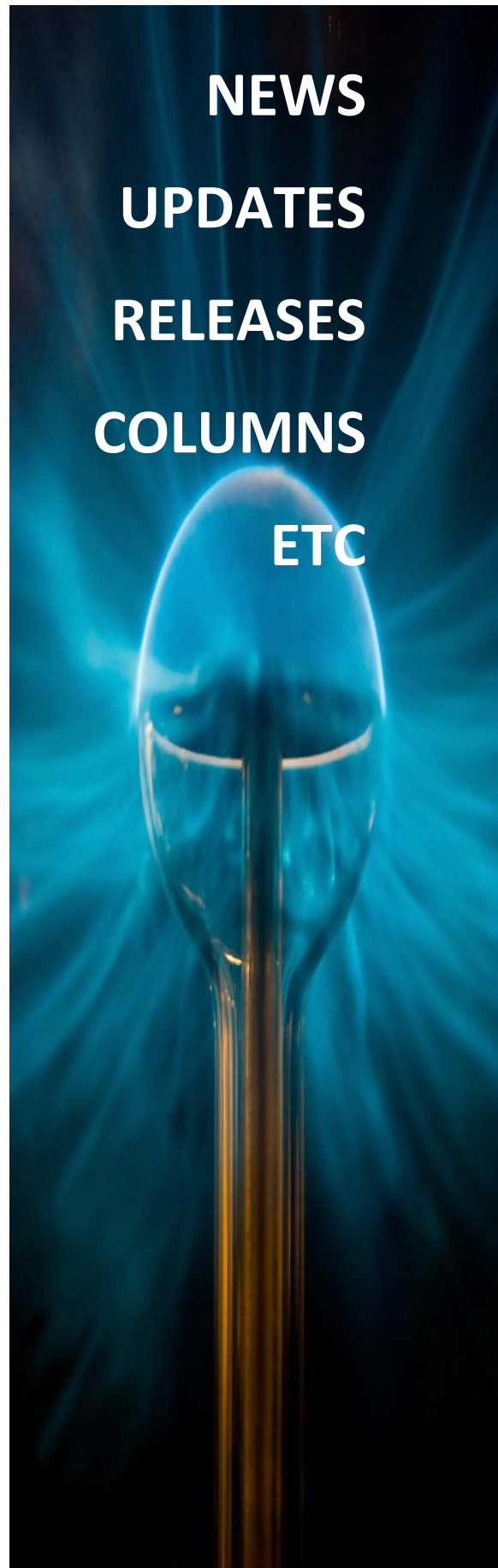
Four new tracks are posted on [Randy Rose's Reverb Nation](#) page.

### Saviour Machine

Saviour Machine posted a [video on their Facebook page](#) announcing a string of concert dates being planned this year. Locations and venues are to be announced, but the concerts will be planned to be more intimate than past concerts. Dates and details will be posted on [saviourmachine.com](http://saviourmachine.com) as they become available.

### The Altar Billies

The Altar Billies have already released their first album. You can find their 11 song debut CD on their [Facebook](#) page and many other online outlets. Eleven tracks of live and studio cuts featuring rockabilly/psychobilly remakes of classic Altar Boys songs. As the band would say – YEE HAW!





*"The Undercover gets the blame for single handedly stopping all those great traditional concerts at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa every Saturday since 1968. Thousands upon thousands have given their lives to Jesus at these anointed Concerts. One day in the mid 80s Chuck Smith showed up one Saturday night and there was The Undercover Band with their shirts off and jumping around like idiots! U call that ground breaking? Hitler was ground breaking too! Just another "in the flesh, look at me" band that never gave God any Glory, and why are you booking these guys?"*

Hitler was groundbreaking too??? What? We definitely get all kinds of letters here, but I'm pretty sure that this is the first one with a reference to Hitler. Besides the obviously flawed comparison, this letter made me reflect on a couple of things. I never lived in California and I was never able to have attended any of these shows back in the day. It was a new, fresh and exciting time in Christian music. There were bands like the aforementioned Undercover, there was The Lifesavers, The Altar Boys, Crumbacher, The Lifters and so on. My wife lived in California then and she remembers going to Calvary Chapel and recalls how cool it was to see all the people who were outside of the mainstream yet together in one place... church. They were hanging out, listening to music and having a good time. Her recollection in comparison to the letter we received made me think of a couple of things.

One is that the differences between what my wife witnessed and what this reader's letter recalled speaks about how different we all are. We are each one looking for something different and unique to us. For the writer of the letter, they were still looking for what had typically gone on at Calvary Chapel, the same type shows and the same type of "anointing" that they were accustomed to. My wife was visiting family in California when she visited Calvary Chapel. She had recently gotten sober from drugs and alcohol and she wanted to know what it meant to love Jesus. She identified with these people who were outside of the norm – she identified with the dress, the music and the message. For me it speaks to how big God is... He comes to us as we are and in a way that we can understand. For my wife, if it had been the same way as in the late 60's and the 70's, it never would have spoken to her the way it did.

The other thing this letter made me think of was this: isn't it time to stop judging people so harshly? Christianity is about love isn't it? "For God so loved the world...", "Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself", "and these three remain, but the greatest of these is love". Love is a big thing. Its open ended and we don't get to choose who we love and who we don't. Doesn't mean we have to agree with everyone or what they do, say or believe, but who are we to say someone else is "in the flesh"? What is that supposed to mean anyway, seriously? Who is this person to say that these guys in Undercover never gave any glory to God? I am usually reminded of the scripture that says that we will be judged in the same way we judge – that's a stark measuring line isn't it? I'm also reminded of the scripture that says to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Our salvation is very personal. The way we come to Christ has different circumstances and the way we express our faith and our salvation may be different from everyone else as well. It doesn't mean that we are "in the flesh" or "out of God's will" or anything of that nature.

So, in conclusion I guess what I am saying is get over yourself. If you don't like what is going on somewhere, go where you can be more comfortable. Just give everyone else the freedom to express themselves in a way that they like. Jump around a little more, take your shirt off from time to time, turn the volume up and remember that you are an individual... just like everybody else.

## Bill Mallonee

Several recent updates worth mentioning from Bill Mallonee: First of all is a [new website](#) designed by John Michael Rose. It contains all kinds of updates, news, lyrics, and community. Next, all 25 albums and 8 Eps have been moved to [bandcamp.com](#). Bandcamp provides listeners with the highest quality audio files of any kind you want. Finally, Bill is planning on recording a new studio, full-band album early next year (the first in 4 years).

## Scaterd Few

HM Magazine recently had this interesting announcement:

"On Jan. 11, 2011 the complete catalog will be available for digital download from iTunes, Amazon MP3, eMusic and Rhapsody among others. "This is just the beginning of what we hope to do in making Scaterd Few available to its fans, the ones that made it all possible in the first place," stated Allan Aguirre, fka Ramald Domkus, singer and founder of the band, "People have waited patiently for authorized digital content, and we appreciate that"."

More details can be found [here](#).

## Dann Gunn/Velocipede

Do you remember a groundbreaking band called Velocipede on R.E.X. Music? They were ground breaking because they went for the two-person band sound years before it was popular. Seems that Dann Gunn, leader of Velocipede, is back with a new album called *Easy*. You can listen to it on purchase it from Dann's website: [danngunn.com/music.html](#)

## Daniel Amos

The rumors are true – a brand new Daniel Amos project will be coming soon, to be funded through Kickstarter.com donations. Anyone that pledges money towards the project will receive special gifts and prizes. Stay tuned for details. Daniel Amos is also planning a tour in June – more details TBA. See [danielamos.com](#) to stay informed.

## Everdown

Former Tooth & Nail east coast hardcore band Everdown released a video for "Black Clover" on their [Facebook page](#). A new album is still in the works.



**SLIDE**

Slide has been a bit quiet recently, but it seems plans have been in the works for a while: In early 2011, Slide will re-launch their [website](#) in preparation of their debut release. Also, SLIDE has recently welcomed Chris Berry and Jeff Lantry to their lineup.

**Kemper Crabb**

Multi-instrumental artist extraordinaire Kemper Crabb announced recently that he has a new album out: *Reliquarium*. Recorded with “no real agenda, stylistically speaking”, Crabb feels that he was “able to combine and juxtapose most of the types of music I enjoy.” Song samples and a free download can be found at [reliquarium.net](#). The most important note about this album is that it is a benefit album designed to raise funds for, and awareness of, Crabb’s father’s missionary organization, Servants of the King ([servantsoftheking.org](#)). Here is some more about Servants of the King:

**Writ on Water**

Writ on Water have uploaded two new tracks to their [Myspace player](#): “Haunt” and “Our Mingled Wires”. Both songs were written and recorded for short films earlier this year. “Haunt” appears in “Deep and Secret Things,” a short film Jeff both directed and co-wrote with collaborator David Whitten, while “Our Mingled Wires” was recorded for another short film entitled “artistic (dis)content.” More information can be found at [newmythictake.com](#). The band also says that it is not out of the question that we could see some sort of new Writ on Water release in 2011.

**Velvet Blue Music**

<http://www.velvetbluemusic.com>

- **Kissing Cousins** is hard at work on a new ep.
- *Panorama* by **Birds & Batteries** (“a rare mix of organic and electronic, pop and experimental”) and *This is Where We Are* by **Seryn** (folk/noisy/pop) are out now
- *At All Angles* by **Winters Fall** (“post-american, math-rock meets twang”) releases February 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Most older, out of print VBM releases are being re-issued in mp3 format on their site.



## Matt's Musings and Meanderings

Some people ask me why I say “corporate greed is killing music.” What about people that are stealing music? Or even those that do buy music but are too lazy to check out anything other than what the corporations are pushing on them? Or couldn’t the blame be placed on the musicians and bands that just dial in a performance and don’t push themselves creatively?

Well, maybe the truth of the matter is that “lazy fans (or musicians) are killing music” really just doesn’t sound as catchy on a t-shirt. But for me, I don’t think these factors are killing music. They are certainly ruining it in some cases, but not killing it. We have always had some fans that don’t want to think and some musicians that are lazy – even back when the music industry was booming. But then again – we also had corporate greed. So what is different now?

The difference is that now fans and musicians that do care can find ways around the corporate greed – both legally and illegally. The digital revolution has leveled the playing field a lot. The corporations could have jumped in early and taken advantage of the changes – but they still would have lost some money. In the long run, they would have still stayed afloat, but that short term loss was just too much for them. So they went the greedy route and fought the change.

The reason this is important is that we still need a national distribution network for people to hear and obtain music (legally). The corporations provide that. Without that, there would be no way for any bands to go on national tours – and almost all bands would just be local acts trying to make a living off the same fans every week. In other words, there would probably be no professional music stars.

There would probably be no music acts at the half time show during the Super Bowl either. You need someone famous to do that, and without the national distribution that labels afford, there would be no stars.

But those corporations are also ripping off their bands. So you see why I pin the problem on the corporations. They could have changed for the better, maybe suffered a bit, but ultimately came out on top with everyone happy and new, sustainable business model.

But they chose the path of greed.







# STEVE HINDALONG:

## CRAWLING IN AND OUT OF SHADOWS TOWARD THE LIGHT

Interview by Steve Ruff

Photography by Amy Jett ([amyjettfinephotography.com](http://amyjettfinephotography.com))

Paintings by Ron Lyon

When it comes to bands that have influenced me on a deep level, The Choir is right up at the top of the list. There is a mystique and uniqueness to this band that comes shining through in everything that they have ever released. The lineup of Steve Hindalong, Derri Daugherty, Tim Chandler, Dan Michaels and Marc Byrd is one of the most effectively artistic teams out there that still can write, record and play music that is relevant, genre defining, exceptionally peculiar yet unmistakably dazzling. These guys have always seemed to come ahead of the curve, really in a sense they defined how wide the curve could be, and they traveled it freely with numerous bands coming behind them and following their lead. You cannot talk about alternative music without listing these guys right up at the top. There might have been secular contemporaries who were in the same category, but I don't think there was anyone in the Christian industry that was doing what these guys (and lady in the early days) were doing.

I think in most circles people cite The Choir's 1990 release *Circle Slide* as their most groundbreaking record, and while that might be true to most, I think 1988's *Chase the Kangaroo* was where they really started to find their sound, pick up stride and take off. The band has been in every musical nook and cranny creatively with each of the various members playing in other bands, producing and engineering for others, contributing to other projects and releasing solo material. Another milestone that I attribute to The Choir boys (Hindalong and Daugherty) was the release of *At the Foot of the Cross* – which was a two part release meant to inspire worship which was, again, ahead of its time.

Through it all I have not only been drawn to The Choir musically, but lyrically I think that main songwriter Steve Hindalong has been at the front of the pack with his lyrics. His writing has predominately been love songs and prayers, but there is a depth of understanding and spiritual urgency that also courses in the undercurrent of the subjects that he embraces. Hindalong has the gift of being able to really communicate the highs and lows of the human condition as it relates personally and collectively. He has the ability to convey what he has experienced in a way that encapsulates the passions and sentiments of the heart and soul. We have interviewed Steve before for a couple of different things

here at Down The Line: he contributed to our Gene Eugene issue and I still have a great interview with him stashed away in the vaults for another subject at a later time.

I find Hindalong to be one of the most accommodating people that I have ever interviewed. He seems genuinely kind, interested and intent on conveying things accurately. I was grateful for the opportunity to catch up with him about their last two releases, *Burning Like the Midnight Sun* and *de-plumed*, which for Choir fans is pretty cool to get two solid albums in the same year! My thanks to Steve for being gracious and answering, re-answering, editing and re-editing the interview that took us several months. That is one of the difficult things about doing a quarterly zine, sometimes you get the news and the scoop but by the time you go to press, the present has become the past and there is newer news. Anyway, Down the Line is pleased to finally feature one of their favorite artists...enjoy!

***Lyrically, have you found that *Burning Like the Midnight Sun* has been challenged to a greater extent by your fan base? What are your thoughts on fan reaction, etc.?***

From the beginning there have been a small handful of responders to our music who seem to want everything they hear to suit their particular points of view, ideologies, agendas and so forth. After every album we would get a few scolding letters, but I stopped concerning myself about those negative reactions decades ago. My lyrics are about what I honestly feel – personal reflections of a flawed, troubled, hopeful man – crawling in and out of shadows toward the light. The responses of our listeners over the years – the ones who profess to take our songs to heart – have been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging.

This is a new era, with so much social media. Everybody has instant, easy access to you, and audience interaction is so immediate. I try to avoid polarizing debates of faith and politics; such conversations are more beneficial face-to-face between individuals with mutual respect for one another. My mind is not made up. I don't think yours should be, either. Immensely more is hidden than is known. I believe God is alive and moving in our midst. If a song inspires listeners to ponder important things, then that's a positive result.

**What responsibility (if any) does an artist have to the listener? Obviously I know you want to appeal to your fan base, but especially in “Christian” music, is there a responsibility that bands should have to the listener in the area of faith?**

That’s an interesting question, and a personal one. My initial response is: No, an artist has no inherent responsibility to his or her patrons, anymore than a patron has any obligation to an artist. They don’t have to buy it, listen to it, hang it on their wall, or pay any mind to it whatsoever. But I do appreciate artists who try to be honest – especially in matters of faith. Merchants employ tools to target certain demographics. In secular music, sex sells. In Christian music, the name of *Jesus* sells. The latter is more problematic, in my view. I don’t imagine most anybody walks around thinking about God and spirituality all the time. We’re consumed by the events of our daily lives. Maybe your beloved family dog just died, or you’re going through a divorce, or your child is suffering from a broken heart, or your dear friend just got diagnosed with a dreaded disease, or you’re falling in love, or you lost your job, or you just inherited a fortune... these are the sorts of things we all feel deeply about, and in my opinion, are the truest inspirations for art. I’m not saying that our spirituality is separate from the events of our lives. As believers we hope Christ is at the center of it all. But when we make music to sell in the Christian marketplace, I think it’s especially important that we examine our motives. To my ears, art, in full cooperation with commerce, so often rings less than true.

Now, having said that, I *have* profited from writing and producing worship songs. When I receive a royalty check in the mail I get happy like everybody else. My motivation is also impure and my heart, conflicted. But in the case of The Choir, our songs have reflected personal faith in the context of real life. We’ve offered both love songs and prayers. That’s a legacy I feel good about.

**What is your favorite track on BLTMS and why?**

I don’t know. I like them all right now. But if I were forced to pick just one, it would be “Bare Trees.” It’s a metaphor for the importance of transparency in intimate relationships – a beautiful marriage of words and melody. And it felt so good to offer yet another heartfelt love song to Nancy after thirty years together. And Derri sang it so well.

**Do you write often? Or do you mostly wait until you get together to write lyrics for an album?**

No, I’m not prolific at all. Most of the songs I’ve written are on albums.

**Are you an avid reader? If so, who are some of your favorite authors?**

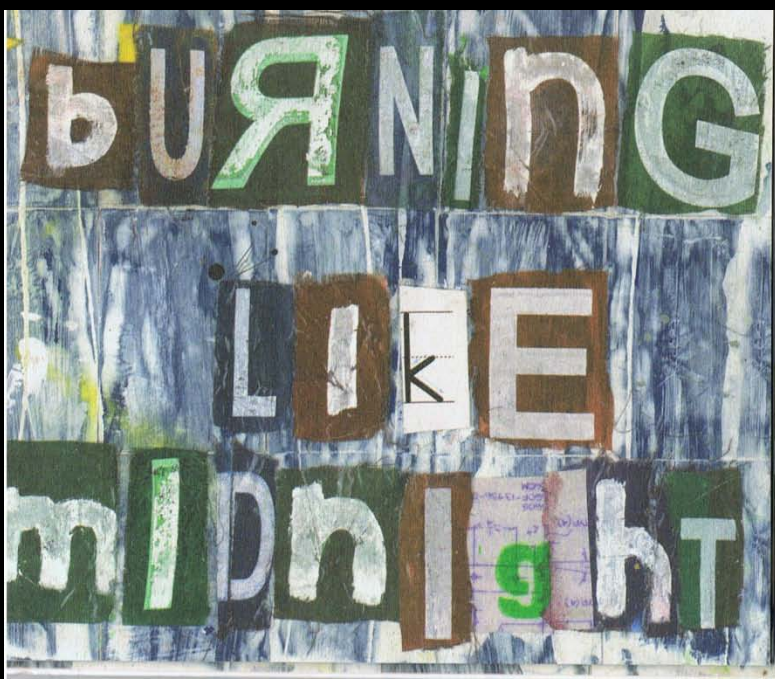
Not avid, no. I read mostly for entertainment. Historical fiction is my preference. I like to feel like I’m learning something in the context of a harrowing hatchet fight. Derri and I both love Stephen Lawhead. I’ve read most of Pat Conroy’s books. *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving is my all time favorite. Or maybe it’s *Shane*, the classic cowboy novel by Jack Schaefer.

**I was reading the latest review about BLTMS in The Chicago Sun Times, and it struck me again how so many critics call Circle Slide a landmark album, even overlooking the Grammy nominated Flap Your Wings. Why do you think Circle Slide is referenced so much out of your extensive catalog as a landmark album? Is it because it was so different than anything else that came out at that time?**

Well, for one thing, it was our most successful album commercially. A lot more people have heard *Circle Slide* than *Flap Your Wings*... or any of our other albums for that matter.

I wouldn’t say *Circle Slide* was so different for the time considering the bands that influenced us. It was 1989, at the culmination of a musical storm of a decade. There were other inspirational, moody, reflective albums around that same season, like *Disintegration* by The Cure and *Starfish* by the Church. Of course, we didn’t know then that another storm was just around the corner – Nirvana and the ‘90s grunge phenomenon.

It was our sixth studio album and we had developed a strong sense of identity and creative confidence. Also, I was in the throes of a serious marriage crisis, so the lyrics are passionate and redemptive – dangerously honest, perhaps. Those themes, being universal, seem to have resonated in the hearts of listeners.





***Do you find that being a Grammy nominated band brings extra pressure when creating new material?***

No. We're not sure how that nomination happened, anyway. We were actually kind of shocked. But it sure was fun to go to the Grammy's and be a part of that whole shindig. We don't feel much pressure to live up to anyone's expectations beyond our own, quite honestly. I tell artists I produce to "make the record you want to hear." Any artist who accomplishes that is successful, regardless if anyone likes it or not. That's been our mindset for a long time. We're pleased with our body of work, and have a lot of appreciation for each other as co-creators and players. So, it's mostly a matter of carving out enough time to make a focused, worthy effort; we want to be satisfied with whatever music we offer. We don't have any unrealistic commercial delusions at this point. I just feel blessed to be able to make music with my friends after all these years, so I'm grateful to any and all who will listen.

***Who are some of your favorite drummers?***

I appreciate innovative, energetic players whose beats serve the songs they play. A few examples are Bryan Devendorf from The National, Nathan Followill in Kings of Leon, Jason McGerr from Death Cab for Cutie, Chris Hrasky in Explosions in the Sky, Phil Selway from Radiohead, as well as more well-known drummers like Larry Mullen, Jr., Stuart Copeland, Mick Fleetwood and Charlie Watts. I also admire the great jazz legends like Elvin Jones and Buddy Rich.

***As a drummer and percussionist where do you draw inspiration for your ideas? I know there is the loop on BLTMS that you said was a crowbar hitting a nail (I think that is what it was), do you sit down and just try different sounds, or how does your percussion progress?***

I like to find things in tool sheds and kitchens to use as percussion instruments. In the case of "A Friend So Kind," Derri had already programmed a chillingly perfect loop. I just wanted to reinforce the backbeat with something metallic. So, I found a nail puller bar, decided to strike it with a screwdriver, and was really pleased how the note resonated in the key. I approach percussion far differently than I do when I sit down behind a drum set. The drum track is what I like to call "the vehicle the song rides in." I either try to lay down a deep groove, or if it's an up-tempo tune, a tight beat. I keep it simple because my kick foot has never been stellar, so why make life harder on myself? Conventional drumming is typically very *objective*. Like most drummers, I've got a kick, snare, hi-hat, cymbals and toms. I suppose most listeners visualize fairly clearly what I am hitting. Percussion, on the other hand, can be very *subjective*. I can open my mind and be sonically experimental. Often, listeners won't know what I'm hitting, but I suppose sound evokes a visual response, so I imagine every person sees something different in their mind's eye when they hear it. I enjoy contributing to the soundscape in that way.

Now indulge me this passionate proclamation: Tambourines should be wooden and round with metal pins and jingles. All plastic, misshapen ones should be promptly thrown into a heap and set ablaze. And here's some friendly counsel to shaker players everywhere from a veteran of the skill: Hold the shaker *level* in cooperation with the law of gravity.

Imagine yourself nipple deep in the Jordan River. Shake along the water line – evenly – as though Jesus of Nazareth has just baptized you unto perfection. And finally, all guitar players, keyboard players – and for heaven's sake, horn players – *please* put down those percussive instruments and walk away slowly.

***What/who would your primary influences be right now musically?***

That's hard to answer. I love the most recent albums by The National, Beach House and Grizzly Bear to mention a few. Explosions in the Sky has been sonically inspirational. But I also enjoy going back to 1971 to play Joni Mitchell's *Blue* or Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On*. My favorite artist of all time is Sade. Having absorbed decades of music, it's difficult to cite any primary influences at this juncture. Derri and I listened to Wilco's self-titled record before I played the drum track for "Between Bare Trees." Derri has been a music-buying addict ever since I've known him. Every time I go over to his studio, he's got a stack of new CDs. But we don't mind going down memory lane, either. If we find ourselves someplace with a jukebox we always select "Feel Like Makin' Love" by Bad Company. Haha!



***Favorite Husker Du record? (Mine is Everything Falls Apart) Are you also a fan of Sugar?***

Husker who? Ask Derald about that. He's a true believer. Sugar? Yeah, I really liked their *Copper Blue* album from '92.

***Is everyone in the band close to each other? I know you and Derri are in Nashville, are Dan, Marc and Tim nearby as well?***

Yes. Dan, Derri and I moved from southern California to Tennessee in 1993, so it's been 17 years. Tim moved out here ten years ago, which inspired the lyric for our song, "Follow Me." Marc also migrated to Nashville from Hot Springs, Arkansas in the mid-nineties, along with his band Common Children.

Our friendships are complex and deep. Music brought us together, but it's about so much more than that now. We've shared much of life's journey – the celebrations, the disappointments, the failures and the successes. I would throw myself in front of a train for the sake of any one of them – their wives, their children – but *not* their pets. Which brings me to another proclamation: Domestic animals lower the quality of our lives. My wife believes they are spiritual beings. Hmm... Animals belong in barns, or better still – in the wild. Have I deviated from your question?

***What would you say the greatest challenge with the BLTMS record was?***

The hardest part was getting started. After that, it was easy. Everybody likes what everyone else does, so the creative process was relatively harmonious. I felt somewhat gloomy once it was done, wishing we could compose and record more songs.

***Are you guys looking for a label to get behind BLTMS, or are you okay staying independent?***

Staying indie is probably our only option, so we may as well be content! Seriously, that's what makes the most sense for us – and for most bands nowadays, it seems.

***So, it had been five years between O How the Mighty Have Fallen and Burning Like the Midnight Sun. Then just a few months later in the same year you guys put out another studio album. How did the idea for de-plumed come about?***

We had performed a private acoustic concert for a few faithful fans in Dan Michaels' back yard last summer. It felt surprisingly good, so we decided to take it on the road as an acoustic duo. Our following is very devoted, so we figured most of them would already have *Midnight Sun*. Our initial idea was to offer a special new recording exclusively for those audiences, which would be something we could also create relatively quickly. I had recently seen one of our favorite bands, The Church, on a tour where they performed one song from each of their albums in reverse chronological order. It made for a very entertaining show. So that's where we got the idea to reinterpret a song from each of our 12 releases, from 1985 to the present.

The title, *de-plumed*, was actually inspired by an art piece given to me several years ago by our gifted friend, Ron Lyon. He's the same artist who more recently painted the front cover image for *Midnight Sun*. In this particular painting there is a bird and a pair of scissors. I thought, "stripped down... featherless... *de-plumed*."

It struck me as a great word to represent an acoustic or "unplugged" album, and also keep the whole "bird/flying" theme we've perpetuated for years. Plus, the artistic continuity between both albums felt poetic.

***Given that you guys don't always like to play older Choir material (from what I've read in previous interviews), how comfortable was it to revisit this material in such a different manner?***

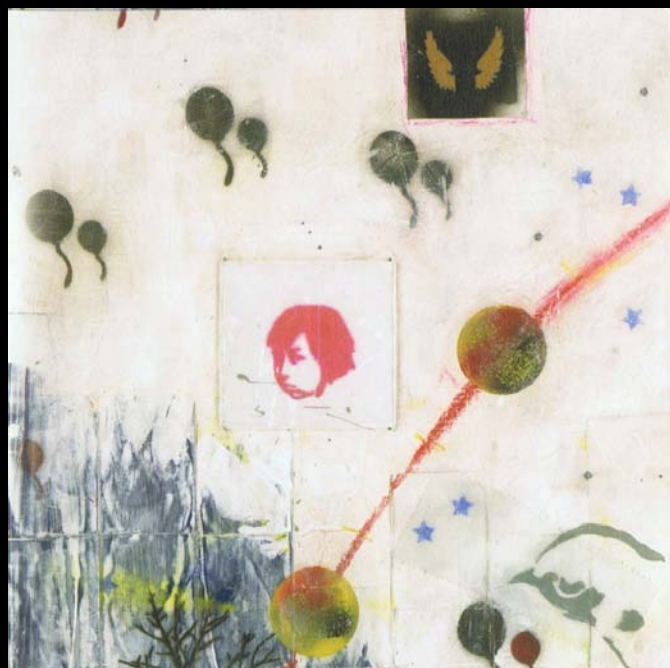
Honestly, it was somewhat difficult to sit there together, Derri and I listening to every album in its entirety. It's true that I hate to look back, since I feel we're still trying to get it right. Our current album is always our favorite and we're already pondering what's on the horizon. But, one afternoon, that's what we did. We chose the songs we wanted to re-record quickly and instinctively.

***What was the most challenging thing about recording an album acoustically, and what has been most rewarding?***

It is definitely a production challenge to record without bass guitar, ambient electrics or keys. We used a bit of glockenspiel for counter melody. Christy Glass Byrd sang harmonies and she always sounds like a million bucks. And perhaps the best decision we made was to bring in Matt Slocum from Sixpence to play cello. He is among the most musical guys around... and a treasured friend. But my favorite song on the album might be "Love Your Mind." And that's simply Derri and his Gibson J-45.

***How have you and Derri enjoyed playing the shows the last few weeks?***

It's been great to get out there and share our music this way. For the most part, we've played "home shows," and we believe our songs come off well in intimate settings. Derri is singing better than ever these days, and I always enjoy getting into my bag of "percussion tricks," playing guitar and performing a song or two of my own. It's been satisfying to interact with people on a more personal level. The vulnerability factor is high, to be sure. Derri thinks I share too much sometimes. I don't know. It's my nature to be unguarded. What have we got to lose at this point, anyway? Everybody wanders in the forest. Regardless, we've had some fine, fun times. Folks have been truly gracious to us.



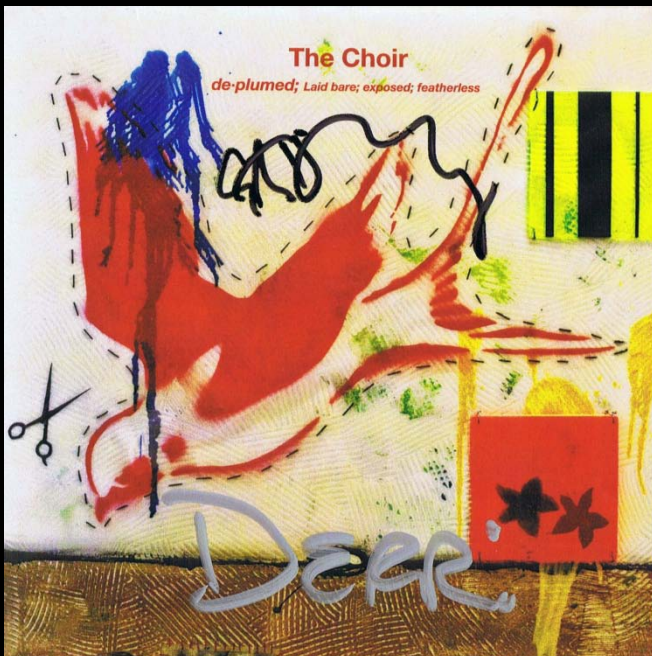
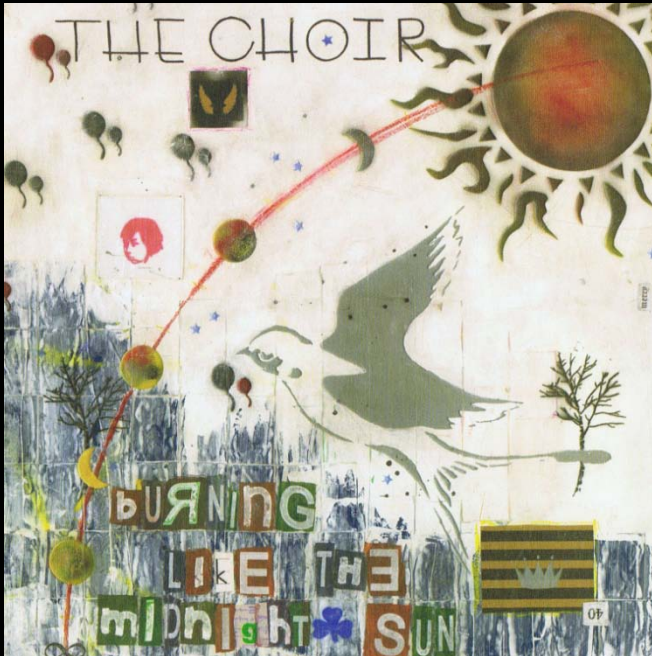


**What have your favorite songs been to play live, and why?**

Well, I've been surprised by "Clouds," from 1987. We had never played it in concert because we weren't confident we could pull it off as a live band. But strangely, it feels powerful as a duo. The words keep convicting me. It feels God-breathed, and I'm not one to say that about songs – almost never, really. Other than that, it's different every night. Certain songs come alive on people's faces. And like I said, we've been up close! I will say that I get a kick out of doing "Wicked Guns," a Lost Dogs song, because I get to sing it and then twirl my rope!

**Any plans to do another acoustic album?**

No such plans.

**How did you feel about the Undercover/Crumbacher/Lifters concert in So Cal on January 8<sup>th</sup>?**

Derri and I opened the show with our acoustic set; then I played percussion for Mike Roe. In retrospect, they probably should've done it without us because the show was *so long*! Ha! The rest of the night was about nostalgia. It was fun to see The Lifters again. Chris Brigandi is a great front man, and the crowd really loved them. Crumbacher was surprisingly tight. They put on an entertaining show for sure – transporting everybody back to the mid-eighties. And I must say, Undercover was as mesmerizing as ever. Ric Alba was playing with them and I felt he added a lot – musically and spiritually.

**You played with a few other people that night. What songs were the highlights for you?**

Riki Michele sang "God of Wonders" with me. She's a very dear friend, so that was special. Ojo Taylor and I also accompanied Mike Roe and Riki as they sang "Dig" in tribute to Gene Eugene. That was a soul-stirring moment.

**You guys were part of a very influential music scene in Southern California in the eighties. Was it good to be together again?**

It was gratifying to interact with one another after so many years – not just the folks that performed, but also several other characters from that scene who were hanging out with us. The atmosphere felt accepting and supportive. We've all seen plenty of valleys and hills. I celebrate each of their journeys and I wish them peace and light.

**What are you working on right now?**

Today, I'm writing album credits for a South African Choir project that I've been working on for several years. It features an awesome black choir from an impoverished township called Masiphumele. I've been so privileged to travel to Cape Town three times to produce the album. Several of my musician friends played on it as well as Jars of Clay, Casting Crowns and Michael W. Smith, so it's a blend of musical cultures. I'm so excited about it! It's called *Living Hope in South Africa*. It'll be available soon.

**What does the future look like for The Choir?**

Derri and I will play five shows in Texas the third week of February. We'll be touring the Midwest and then travel back east in April and May. Beyond that, I honestly don't know. I feel like hitting some drums really hard right about now, though!

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# CRUMBÄCHER:

## A Tough Act To Follow...

Interview by Steve Ruff

This is basically a second part of a larger interview that we posted to the Down The Line website a few weeks back. If you missed the first part of it, swing by the website ([www.downthelinezine.com](http://www.downthelinezine.com)) and check it out. In this part everyone that has played in the band weighed in with one set of questions or another. We had the chance to catch up with some of the band members after the Undercover/Crumbächer show that was just played in January. If you feel inclined, there is also a link at the bottom of the page to support the ministry that the reunion show benefited, as well as to help out with ongoing expenses from the show.

**Looking back and being there in the early eighties as one of the forerunners of the alternative Christian scene, what were some of the biggest obstacles that you had to overcome as a band in the industry?**

**Dawn:** The biggest obstacles to overcome in the industry I would say were fitting into the mold that the industry wanted to put us in. As we moved into the mainstream Christian music scene with each consecutive album release – those expectations became more important to the labels and people we were working with. They had concerns about lyrics, our appearance and even our attitudes about issues such as “dancing”. I know some of these issues may seem trivial in our world now but growing up in the church of the 70s (and for my brother and I, as missionary kids) we had spent much of our teenage years conforming our actions and behaviors to what

was expected. As we entered our early 20s – we were ready to shed those things and step into who we really were – and yet – the industry had its expectations of what we should say and how we should say it. I wanted to rebel against it – but I felt I would be ungrateful in doing so. I felt blessed to be where I was and I knew I shouldn’t take it for granted. Not everyone gets to fulfill their hopes and dreams in such a way. So I battled these things inwardly. These “inner demons” I guess you could say – came out later in my music with *Almost Ugly*. It was a very freeing musical experience for me.

**Jimmy:** For me it was learn as you go, while assuming those people you found yourself in subjection to actually knew what they were doing, as they seemed to position themselves so confidently and comfortably within that thought. Granted, this applies to me as well if I place myself in this second position. I think another perspective would be the challenge of navigating through people’s hesitations as you try your best to operate in your own liberties while doing what you do well.

**Stephen:** Being raised in the church, we all knew what we were up against regarding perception of what a Christian artist should be, although we also had the youthful optimism that being privy to this inside knowledge would somehow assist us in navigating those waters and winning over support. We were wrong of course, and faced a lot of the same resistance as many of the more progressive artists, but we also knew that Christian teenagers were totally hungry for this type of music regardless of what their

ministers were telling them. We remembered hearing the same warnings as teens ourselves about the demonic beats and satanic lyrics of Rock ‘n’ Roll, trying to corrupt our souls, etc... It was an uphill battle, to be sure, but we realized it would be from the very beginning. I mean, we were all raised in churches where many considered it a sin to dance – just like in the movie “Footloose” but yet there we were, a naïve little band of church kids that performed primarily what would have been considered at the time to be dance music! Our parents and families were very supportive of us though and I’ll never forget the first time my 64 year-old conservative fundamentalist Christian Mom saw us play with Undercover and the Altar Boys. I warned her that there would probably be kids dancing at the show to our music and the other bands’ so that she wouldn’t be shocked by what she saw. We went on first, but she and my dad stayed for the whole evening and at the very end she came to me and said, “You know, I think I’ve been wrong all these years; there’s nothing sinful about dancing when you’re just having fun like these kids were here tonight. It’s too bad that we didn’t have good Christian music like this to dance with when I was young; we missed out on a lot.” Now you have to understand, a statement like that would have been considered heresy in some of the churches I grew up in, but my mom, even after all those years of following the rules, saw that there was something special happening with this generation that made her have to reevaluate a few things. From that point on my parents were at just about every local show we did (and even some that weren’t so local) cheering us on.



As performers we also understood that we were going to be held up as Christian role models, and even though we didn't want that unrealistic and ultimately impossible-to-live-up-to responsibility, it was part of the job which we had to take very seriously. There were no wild tour parties or anything of the sort in our band, and really there wouldn't have been anyway as that just wasn't the type of people we were. I can honestly say we were your basic well behaved church kids, albeit with a bit of a rebel streak. Still, we knew that every move we made would be scrutinized under a microscope to ensure we weren't a bad influence on our young audiences. As noted, unrealistic yet undeniably part of the job. I guess looking back, maybe I wish we could have lightened up a bit, and enjoyed the experience a little more while it was happening; but we did keep out of trouble.

Ironically though, one of our biggest battles came from the commercial side of things more than the church. Christian music as a business has to look at its consumer audience – mainly other Christians – and deliver accordingly. They may say that the intent is to reach “the lost” for Jesus, but in reality it is mostly the already self-identified Christians they are selling to. In our case there was always concern that since we did not specifically mention Jesus in our early songs our demographic target audience might be confused as to whether or not we really were Christians. As an artist, this really frustrated me because I felt like I was writing songs that truly reflected my faith from an artistic perspective – “Glowing in the Dark”, “Identical Twins”, “Interstellar Satellite” – and it should already be established where I was coming from spiritually since I was signed to a known Christian artist label. But it seemed the industry didn't have enough faith that their listeners could put the pieces together and figure it out for themselves without us constantly reassuring them in every other song that indeed we really were still Christians, by inserting references specifically to Jesus, Lord, God, Savior... I didn't have a theological problem with it per se, but to throw religious references into songs just to get them played on Christian radio seemed a little disingenuous. Finally at one point I was informed by label A&R if I didn't write a song for our upcoming “Thunder Beach” album that could be played on traditional Christian radio, then they would have someone write one for me (and I WOULD record it!). That was when I went home and wrote “Here Am I” which became our first nationwide number one hit on Christian radio. It turned out the execs were right, but I was never completely comfortable with the practice of leveraging religious catch phrases for the purpose of optimizing a song's chart position. These days though it seems the whole industry is based on doing just that; I can't even listen to what is considered contemporary Christian radio anymore without wondering where so much

of the artistic creativity has disappeared to. Many of today's artists do seem to be more financially successful than we were though so maybe it's a tradeoff they are willing to live with. But for me Christian music has lost its artistic edge from the early years. Don't get me wrong, I still feel like there are many very talented musicians and singers out there, I'm just not hearing very many great songs. Maybe that observation shouldn't just be aimed at Christian music exclusively, but I always felt that if we really believed we had tapped into the creative power of the universe through our faith, we should be setting creative standards; instead we just keep pandering to the masses like most other pop entertainment does.

**Did you guys view yourselves as a ministry band, or did you look at it more as entertainment?**

**Dawn:** Honestly we felt like we were entertainers. Yet, we also felt a definite connection to our audience which helped with the ministry side of the band. We were all raised in the church and we related easily to our audience. We enjoyed providing church kids with music that they really loved and could have fun with. As we were growing up in the church (and especially in the missionary community) mainstream styles of music, especially secular were not acceptable for “Christians” to listen to and for us that became confusing as we were drawn to it. My view is that there should not be a line drawn between secular and Christian music. I feel that the music and the artist performing it should be able to convey who and what they are without having a label attached.

**Jimmy:** It was purely therapeutic and much more rewarding than being a Go-fer. I think anyone that formally accepts the idea that they are a “minister” positions themselves in a very precarious place, and in doing so limits the liberty which God's spirit requires in order to use his people effectively in revealing His grace. So yeah, it was pretty entertaining for us. We were pretty darn good at what we were doing.

**Stephen:** Personally I saw what we did as entertainment, good, quality, fun, family friendly entertainment. We knew though, that many of the venues we would be playing had a different view of our mission, and so we opened ourselves up to being available to more ministry focused events when it was appropriate. We were never totally comfortable with the exclusively ministry focused role though. I think it's because we could all see the value in putting on a great show and uplifting an audience that way, and then letting the ministry come from that experience however people were open to it. When

we were just starting out we would get into a little trouble at some events upon informing the promoter or sponsor that we did not have a point in our show when we did a traditional altar call, where people would get the chance to come forward and pray to have a relationship with God. It just seemed so out of place for what we were doing, and being that we were all raised in the Christian church our whole lives, we felt that a commitment to any type of spiritual relationship should be a more personal thing. If the music could lead people down that path then great; we just didn't feel it was our calling to force the outcome of a spiritual awakening to be the end result of that musical journey. Besides, concerts are just too emotional anyway to get a true sense of what you really believe or want, when the lights are flashing, smoke is blowing, and music pounding. But if we could put on a show where people would leave feeling better and more hopeful about life than they did when they came in and give them something to think about, that was our ministry, and we were most successful when we were coming at it from that angle.

**Were there perceived ideas that you had to overcome?**

**Jimmy:** Mostly my own, coming from a life as the child of Missionary parents. The American music culture was challenging for me as I tended to want to operate from a “Third Culture” perspective, but found it necessary to accept many cultural positions as valid without fully understanding why.



**Dawn:** I feel as Jim, that our perception was clouded by quite a bit more than just the ideas about music. We were coming from a “third” culture as we began to assimilate back into American life – and we also had that to deal with those issues personally. I do know this – my perception of how we would be treated as a band was shattered quickly. In the industry, everything is moving quickly in production with deadlines, marketing and the “machine” that helps to run a band. I don’t want to place blame necessarily on anyone specific – but I did not feel that the people in booking, record companies or promotion really cared about anyone in the band. Steve was the front man and in their eyes; he was the “important” one. Mind you – I didn’t have much issue with it – I just accepted it as the way it was. I will say this though – now that I’m in management with bands and work in production with them, it does help that I had the experience. I definitely try to be aware of those who might not be the main focal point – and let them know how valuable their contribution to the project is.

#### **Why did the band come to an end?**

**Dawn:** As mentioned earlier, after doing four albums with Crumbächer, without much of a creative outlet – I was becoming weary of the same process. I needed a change. I had been married all of the years that I was in the band and waited to have a family so that I could concentrate on music. After four years, I began to feel motherhood calling me. I became pregnant with my daughter, Janae. As soon as that transpired, we all basically knew that our touring/recording would come to an end. I can’t speak for everyone – but it was just obvious to me that it was time to move on. I would never have traveled with or without a baby – I knew it was not a place to raise my daughter. I have a very strong “mother” instinct – I loved being pregnant and loved the entire idea of being a mother as well. That being said, after my daughter, Janae was born I still attempted to make it work. Janae was born in January, 1989 and we had a tour coming up in the Spring. I would not leave her at home – so my sister Beth filled in for me. It was a fun time for the band actually because for a few brief months – I even performed locally with my sister and another drummer, Mike Barnett who also filled in for my brother during some of those months. I guess it was almost like we couldn’t really let go – or didn’t really know how to let go. I remember my last show very well – it was bittersweet. I knew that I was leaving behind something very special – yet it was just

time to move on. I’m very grateful for the years I had with Crumbächer.

**Jimmy:** It hasn’t. We are the band, the audience just doesn’t have a real good way of knowing what we are doing anymore. We could produce even better stuff today, perform everywhere etc., we just have a few more responsibilities than we did since our last project. So I think it’s about what stops us from doing it.

**Stephen:** I think after four albums we had finally done everything we could or at least wanted to do in that configuration. We were and still remain close friends, but everyone, including me, had things they needed to try outside of the Crumbächer format. Also, marriage, kids, and other major life events moved in and we had other responsibilities to our families outside of the band. I would be lying if I said I didn’t miss some parts of it, but honestly you just reach a certain point when touring and playing music isn’t the only thing you live for.

#### **You guys have obviously stayed friends, have you kept in touch through the years or was there a reunion of sorts?**

**Dawn:** We have stayed in touch over the years. We’ve all been friends for so long – some of us even before the band – so when the marriages and babies come along – you just naturally stay in touch for those parts of life as well. There were times where some of us wouldn’t see each other for a year or so – and I can’t say it’s always been good times, but that’s just how it goes. I can definitely say that the families of the band and crew are family to me and always will be. Our children grew up together – we just spent New Year’s Eve together – and it’s always good to get back together like that. In 2005, we gathered at my parent’s house for a dinner party. That little get-together sparked the 2005 Broken Records Reunion Show.

**Jimmy:** A) You could say that B) In a way C) Yes D) Perspective changes, and with it faith....hope, love. Radical and Ridiculous.

#### **Have you guys stayed with your faith as Christians?**

**Dawn:** I feel stronger than ever in my faith. More than anything – I feel that I understand much more about who God

is – and how I relate to Him and how He sees us. I feel that I really understand now the true nature of a loving father – who loves all of His children – regardless of their color, sexual preference, or political beliefs. I might not really fit in much in a traditional church setting anymore – I really feel like an outsider when I enter one. But that really has nothing to do with my relationship with God. It’s just a preference I suppose. I would never want to put down anyone in the church – as I believe we are all heading the same direction and we should support one another and allow each one to worship and serve God in the way that works for them.

I also have to give credit to my “boys” in the band, Sleeping Giant. The church I attend, Tithemi, is pastored by the lead guitarist, Eric Gregson. I met Tommy Green, the lead singer about 7 years ago when he was pastoring there. When Tommy would speak about Jesus – there was something different about it all – he was really “in love” with this man, Jesus. I was enthralled by the aspect of a relationship like that with God. It has really had an impact on my life to be a part of their community. I was able to work with the band for a year in management – and it was thrilling to work again in the Christian music side of the industry. I also ran a non-profit ministry, Open Arms – a community house in Grand Terrace, CA for 5 years and I had the constant support of Eric and Tithemi. I’m truly blessed and grateful to have been a part of their true community as a believer.





**Stephen:** We are still close, extended family really. Faith-wise I would say that our foundations are essentially the same as when we were just teens growing up in the Christian church, even if we have all progressed in our own unique directions. It's all very personal though and I can't speak for anyone else in the band except to say that if there truly is a heaven, I believe you'll see the members of Crumbächer there... and we'll most likely be opening for Undercover as usual.

**Are there any memorable shows that really stuck with you, and were there any favorite bands that you liked to play with?**

**Dawn:** I loved to play with Steve Taylor and Undercover. Steve was always very gracious – he's an awesome person. He would remember everyone he had met before – and I don't just mean the band members – but even our family members. He was a kind soul and you just wanted to be around him. Undercover was always that way as well. They were real, down-to-earth and just genuine dudes. Memorable shows were Knott's Berry Farm Music Nights. We played many of them, New Year's Eve and sometimes spring or fall as well.

**Jimmy:** You know there should have been some favorite bands to play with, but we traveled alone so much and when we did play with other bands it was a onetime deal. I think our favorite scene was the big festivals. It was the best of everything and the whole event

was just very rewarding in so many ways. You interacted with other bands, with fans, with the techs, the teachers and even a few crazy's. Yeah, there are some really unstable Christians out there. Very cool.

**Stephen:** Our first show as a band was opening for Undercover, The Altar Boys, The Choir (Youth Choir), and The Lifters on New Year's Eve 1983 in Orange County, CA – it doesn't hardly get any better than that! We also got to work with Steve Taylor a couple times, which was incredible. I remember opening for Sheila Walsh once too when we were just starting out and she was just so gracious and kind, and went out of her way to tell us how much she enjoyed our set. I think that was one of the best parts of being in the band really, getting to meet and work with so many of the artists we looked up to. That's what made the festivals like Cornerstone and Creation so much fun. There were also certain pockets across the country where we could always expect enthusiastic crowds: Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Amish country of all places), central Florida, Ontario Canada, Phoenix Arizona, and naturally close to home in southern California in Orange County or the Inland Empire where we were based. I probably looked forward to the New Year's Eve shows at Knott's Berry Farm most of all, getting the chance to not only be on the same bill with our favorite artists but hang out with them on our home turf as well.

**What is everyone's favorite album and why?**

**Dawn:** I think my favorite album is *Incandescent* more for personal reasons. That album to me signifies who Crumbächer was/and is. We were young and innocent – and it's nice to think back on those times. Sometimes the creative process becomes so watered down when you get more cooks in the kitchen – and I feel that the first album was really untouched by anyone outside. To me – the memories from the recording process are wonderful and terrifying at the same time. We were young and it was so exciting to be thrust into something like that – but it felt so true to who we were as a band. I didn't realize until years later who Ojo really was in the scene. I do remember Ojo telling us that the vocal arrangements might be a little too challenging for us! We plugged through and kept them anyway! Derri Daugherty was engineering – it was a fun exciting time.

**Jimmy:** Lyrically *Escape From The Fallen Planet* | Style Worlds Away CD

**Stephen:** My favorite Crumbächer album was typically whatever we last worked on, though now I have to say I keep going back to *Escape From The Fallen Planet* as the album I would most like to be remembered for. There is so much blood, sweat and tears (not exaggerating) in those songs both musically and lyrically, and it is probably the best reflection of who I was as a creative person during that time in my life. I've always felt that if anyone wanted to know who I really am and what goes on in my mind, it's all there in those songs and that recording in particular. To the critics who said those songs were somewhat shallow and didn't have much meaning to them, I would say that perhaps they didn't listen hard enough, or maybe they just weren't big fans of our synth pop style. But on that album I pretty much tell you everything there is to know about me.

**Can you each pick favorite songs off each album?**

**Dawn:** *Incandescent* – It Don't Matter  
*Escape From The Fallen Planet* – Tourist Trap  
*Thunder Beach* – Once In A Heartbreak  
*Tame The Volcano* – Rainy Season

**Jimmy:** *Incandescent* – "Sweet by and by" (A song we all grew up singing in a much different style and it brought the two worlds together) *Escape From The Fallen Planet* – "Tourist Trap" (I was into Tears for Fears at the time and I used some of what I had heard from them on this song. Also the concept of this song grabs me.) *Thunder Beach* – "Thunder Beach" (I felt like this song really went well live and had potential to really rock if we played well. It spoke to our target audience at the time so it felt like we were communicating part of our perspective on some of our challenges in this alternative style).

**What are your favorite songs to play live?**

**Dawn:** "It Don't Matter," "Tourist Trap," "Once In A Heartbreak"

**Stephen:** The up-tempo songs were always the most fun to play live naturally; "Thunder Beach" was the best show opener, "Jamie" and "Life of the Party" were great closers. But I also remember there were times when we would play "Interstellar Satellite" and it would just be surreal, the response the song would get. "Reckless Boys and Bad, Bad Girls" was a



great number live too, even though we only performed it a few times before disbanding. Probably my least favorite to play live was “Here Am I” since it was uncharacteristic of our sound overall, yet one of our most popular songs on the radio. Radio hits were always a mixed blessing: on one hand they gave us exposure to a larger audience that would have otherwise never given our music a chance; on the other hand they didn’t really represent our core sound very well. Still, any time you can play a song for a responsive and appreciative audience, how can you not enjoy that experience? I’ve since made peace with those songs and do enjoy playing them live now because they are how so many of our fans met us for the first time. The most personal song to me is of course “Once More for the Band” on the last official Crumbächer album, because I wanted the band and the fans to know how much the whole experience of working in this group meant to me, even though it was clear we were coming to a point where it would have to end. If you want to know the song that was the most fun to record, I think the band would agree that “Tame the Volcano” will always be remembered as the song we laughed through more than anything, with all the chants and sound effects; I think everyone thought I was crazy when I would tell them, “Okay, now sing this...” and it just got weirder and weirder.

#### Anything that you would like to add?

**Dawn:** I work with young artists in management now and I know how important it is to educate them about the music industry. I want to thank Down The Line for the work that you do commemorating those who have had an impact in the music scene over the years. It’s so important to know your own roots and also educate yourself about those that have gone before you. Thanks for your work!

**Jimmy:** Do what makes you happy, what you are good at, what gets you out of bed every day. If everyone did this we wouldn’t focus so much on trying to do what we think we are supposed to do to please everyone else. You are specific... be specific.

**Stephen:** Since I feel as a songwriter I better represent myself through my music (and not in interviews), I should probably close saying that I hope I’m not entirely done with music yet; but if I am done, I have nothing to regret and everything to be thankful for regarding my experiences in this band and the music biz in general. I still feel like I might have

something more to say, just not enough time at the end of the day to say it at this point. But as I tell my friends and co-workers now, I got to live the musician’s dream as a young man, walked away from it to have a wonderful family, and then every five years or so still get the chance to pretend I’m a pop star for about an hour all over again with the best little techno-pop band I know. I’ve been very fortunate.

#### Extra Questions for Dawn:

#### How did the re-release of *Escape From the Fallen Planet* come together?

**Dawn:** Meis Music Group is working with KMG to re-release many of the albums from the Frontline catalog. When Meis Music Group heard about the show in January – they decided to release one of Crumbächer’s albums to coincide with the live show; as they were also planning the Undercover, *Branded* release. These are both 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary albums and we are excited about it being re-mastered and the added bonus track. Chris Duke also worked hard on the cover and it even looks better!

#### Are there any other re-releases planned for the future?

**Dawn:** I don’t know at this point if they will re-release the other albums – all are now available on iTunes though in their original state. It would be nice to re-master the others as well and even add extra tracks. I guess they will see how this release fares first.

#### Are you still playing in the band *Almost Ugly* with Christopher Duke?

**Dawn:** Almost Ugly doesn’t play live anymore. When we did – we had a blast – we were able to play the Hollywood club scene – it was new and different territory for us and we really loved it. We are just beginning to get the material released on iTunes. We’ve had songs on the Roswell DVD Release, Lifetime Movies, “She’s Too Young” and “Cyber Seduction”, and other CBS TV movies. I feel like we will continue to release other material and write as we go forward in working for TV.

#### Is there any released material from *Almost Ugly*?

**Dawn:** Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – our first collection will be released on iTunes – *Basement Tapes*. These songs, even though they have been played on TV and more – have

never been released on iTunes. You can find a link to it at [www.take2productions.net](http://www.take2productions.net).

#### POST REUNION SHOW, SEVERAL MEMBERS WEIGH IN

#### How was the show for you guys this time?

**Dan:** The show was pretty good. I know I felt rusty, but it helped that Dan Davila graciously lent me his guitar rig and helped me get a really good guitar sound. Beyond the show itself, being together with the band again was really special. I have savored the reunion shows. At any given moment you look across the stage and wonder if it will be the last time you play with the band. Sounds maudlin, but it is a pretty emotional feeling.

**Jimmy:** Mixed Nuts... I don’t like them. A recipe for crazy. Our set went rather well considering. It was all a bit stressful for me. Too many other people to worry about, and I was. Don’t want sympathy or even empathy here because my challenge was absolutely nothing compared to some. Otherwise, the show was great in that I think I had about 15 people there who have known me for a while and yet had never seen me play with Crumbächer. The most important one being my son Quincy (19, and yes after Jones), who is himself an accomplished drummer whom I have high hopes for if it is to be.

**Dawn:** This show was even more emotional for me personally than the last time in 2005. I had worked so hard on the promoting for months before – that by the time I made it to the show – I was exhausted. Seeing the fans, friends, family was overwhelming to me again just as it was at the Broken Records Reunion Show. I also really felt like it might be the last time we would ever play together again onstage; I can’t explain why – it just felt that way. When a band stops playing – you just let that part of your life go. And you really don’t feel like it’s “you” anymore – if that makes sense. Now that my two children are grown - I’ve got a couple of seasons (I hate that word actually) of my life that have now passed.. and to revisit them in such a way – is very emotional and surreal. As Jim mentioned – it was also stressful trying to manage everyone and think about everything going on besides actually playing. I felt well prepared this time as far as knowing my parts – it was easier this time to get it back from my memory banks!!

As far as some of the other performances and bands there – I really felt it was an extremely special evening. So much love, memories and



appreciation for each other and some amazing performances. It was overwhelming to be a part of it all. One time, in the green room – I interrupted Ojo and Mike Roe as they were going over "Dig" on the piano. I HAD to check a part for one of our ballads and make sure I knew it. After that moment – I couldn't believe I had just done that! I almost shoved Ojo out of the way to check something!! There were moments like that happening all day. Other artists, Mike Pritzl and Mike Stand were hanging out too. It was really a fun time!

**Christopher:** The show was great and actually (at least outwardly) seems like the easiest part. It's the preparation where something like this takes its mental toll, on me at least. When fans come up to you after a gig, like this one, and let you know how it affected them, and God bless' em, it's usually above and beyond what they expected, on many levels. The performer in me digs and subconsciously craves this admiration I think, because right before I walk on stage, all I can think about is all the areas in which I am most likely to screw up. Our rehearsals seemed rushed at best, but we are all pretty seasoned in our own areas and at some point default to each of our respective musical comfort zones. I doubt if we'll ever get back to those magical carefree days of this is all we do, but the occasional bring' em outta the closet and dust'em off gigs are probably the cheapest and only plausible time machine we have access to right now. So Dawn, and all those involved. I thank you from the bottom of my soul for the trip.

#### **What was the song you guys ended up enjoying the most while playing?**

**Dan:** My favorite was playing "Tourist Trap." It has probably been around 23 years since I played it. The song has some noisy guitar in it... I like noisy guitar.

**Jimmy:** I enjoyed doing "Tourist Trap", regardless of the fact that it put Stephen flat on his back out of breath by the end of the song. It had been at least.... I'd say 22 years? Just a great song for me and I love the music, lyrics AND... the tempo.

**Dawn:** I was most excited to play "Tourist Trap" but it was the hardest song live for me - so I can't say I enjoyed it as much as I wish. For me the best moment of the show was during "Life Of The Party" – our finale. Mike Barnett (Crumbächer - Duke drummer) joined us onstage, playing percussion and some of

his family started a conga line. My dad, who is 71 - decided to get in it. My mom and all of our kids joined in. By the time the song was ending – it went from a few people to an entire line the length of the building and it was a sweet moment to see all of those people having such a great time! I will never forget it - what a gift it was to watch from stage.

**Christopher:** I thought it was going to be "Tourist Trap," which was cool too. My favorite one was "Once in a Heartbreak" I think. My buddy Mike was on stage playing percussion right behind me. Dawn comes over during my solo and we have a short band mate bonding moment. The other reason I liked that tune was that my 9 year old son Alex (who hates loud noises and wears ear plugs to movies) was right up to the edge of the stage, over on my side, decked to the nines like a 70's rocker and totally soaking up the whole vibe. I have moments in that tune where I'm not playing, so I would cruise over to him and high five and stuff. We both totally dug that. It was his first time seeing his Dad play. I will remember that for a long time, hope he does too.

#### **How was the crowd response?**

**Dan:** They seemed to be into it... waving their canes in the air and stuff.

**Jimmy:** Crumbächer has always been very hard for me to put in summary for people who ask. It's a band you just have to hear live. You just won't get the full effect from our recorded material. Not a big elaborate show... just very effective live and I think you get drawn in both musically and emotionally. Stephen's dramatic writing is expressed cohesively by the whole band all at once. I think I would say for all of us one of the pinnacles of this business is the live performance. So yes, large or small the crowd's response is always anticipated regardless of perspective. If you can't work off of anyone else's perspective for whatever purpose, why are you doing it? I'd say perhaps because it matters.

**Dawn:** The crowd was amazing. They were so into it. Many of them were singing every word along with us. As a performer - when the crowd is really with you - the adrenaline just kicks in. I had a great time. As Jim mentioned – we've always felt like our live shows were a great representation of Crumbächer - and I have to give credit to our fans - they have

always had a big part in our making our shows a success.

**Christopher:** Was super, as usual. Crumbächer seems to bring people to their feet whenever we play. Shake it! My only wish is that they could have been closer to the stage. A lot of modern venues (churches especially) have the front row about 20 feet or more from the stage, plus the churches always have that crazy staircase right up to the middle that keeps this weird buffer zone between you and the audience. Again crowd AAA+++

#### **What has each member in the band gone on to do presently?**

**Dan:** I'm a Computer Systems Architect. I enjoy the work, but talking about it is guaranteed to suck the life out of any conversation. As far as music, I recently did an album called *Singing Scriptures Romans Cycle*, which is KJV verses from Romans put to music.

**Jimmy:** Ummm, I work in a warehouse. Yeah, it's fascinating. Actually, I am fortunate. I work for Toyota Motor Sales in perhaps their busiest parts distribution center in the country, if not the world. We get your replacement parts to your dealership. A really great company.

I'm also active with a non-profit called "Missionary Kids Ministries". Have been on their board of directors now for over 10 years and have the opportunity to work with BIOLA University, Azusa Pacific University, and California Baptist University, all of which are right here in southern California. We partner with each of these schools in helping facilitate and support the re-accluturation of college age children of Christian missionary's into American culture. The phenomenon called "Third Culture" is very evident and valuable in not only these particular individuals, but pretty much anyone who has spent a significant amount of time living in a culture other than their own, then returning to the first and dealing with a third perspective which is generated from the experience. You can find us at: [MKMinistries.org](http://MKMinistries.org), also see [TCKid.com](http://TCKid.com)

**Dawn:** I currently work as Creative Director for Take 2 Productions. I left my job in 2007 at ABC Television (Manager of Creative Music Services) in 2007 to start the company with my sister, Beth Jahnsen. We help provide opportunities for artists to reach a wider audience through placement in TV shows,

# JAMEY BOZEMAN:

THE LIGHT AND HOPE OF CHRIST WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ART

Interview by Steve Ruff



One of the coolest things about doing this zine is not just getting to talk to my favorite artists, but also communicating with other people about great music that means something to us. I really enjoy reading feedback from our readers because it gives us some type of gauge as to how we are doing and how people are enjoying (or not) the bands that we cover and the stuff we have to say. People don't always take time out of their schedule to drop an email, but sometimes we get some pretty crazy letters, and sometimes we get really cool encouraging emails. Jamey Bozeman sent us a really nice email a few months back. I immediately recognized the last name and Matt and I were pretty sure that it was Jamey Bozeman from the band Luxury that was one of the original Tooth 'N Nail artists. Fortunately it was.

It was really cool to catch up with Jamey and talk about Luxury and what he is up to now. We were trying to get his brother Lee in here also, but they both have pretty constant demands on their time and we just couldn't get Lee in here. I highly recommend that you purchase this music if you haven't already. Like so many other great artists, Luxury was ahead of the time for the Christian industry. They came out on a label that was breaking into the scene in a big way, and they were a unique act for the Tooth 'N Nail roster who mostly signed much heavier acts at that time.

It was a moment in time in the music world, one that was welcomed, and one that is missed.

**Can you give me a history of Luxury and who the players were?**

The beginnings of Luxury were with our drummer, Glenn Black, and with me at Toccoa Falls College, where we played in a band called "Various Artists" between 1988 and 1990. Chris Foley and my brother Lee enrolled at TFC in 1990, at which point the three of us (Lee, Chris and me), plus drummer Todd Monroe, started a new band that was eventually known as "Flagday." Todd moved on in 1991, and Glenn, Lee, Chris and I formed a new band combining these two previous groups. What we started would become "The Shroud" in 1991, and included guitarist David Jarvis. Eventually David stepped down, and I stepped back in after taking a short break from the band.

By January of 1992, between fall and spring semesters at TFC, Glenn, Chris and I began writing songs that were more aggressive and less Cure-ish, if you will. Up until this point, we had drifted into very moody, atmospheric writing, and our new musical ideas were taking us away from those roots. Lee was

away over the winter break, and returned to find something new happening with us musically. That was a turning point for us musically and as a band. After experimenting with the line-up and the sound for quite a while, we were starting to solidify what we were after musically. That is to say, we were still pretty unfocused stylistically (were we going to sound like The Smiths or Fugazi?), but we were now focused enough to begin becoming a "real" band.

The Shroud made some initial 4-track recordings with David Jarvis in 1992, and then later (as we were improving our writing and performance skills) recorded a four-song demo with Andy Lemaster (now better known for producing a number of cool bands and for his own band Now It's Overhead and his work with Bright Eyes). This four-song e.p. was called *Tinsel*. This was our first legitimate demo, and it helped to break us into the Atlanta music scene. In early 1993, we recorded a full-length release called *Candy Darling*, again with Andy Lemaster. The whole thing was recorded on a Tascam 8-track cassette multi-track recorder. It was utterly low-tech by today's standards, but I still have a soft spot in my heart for that amazing piece of technology. We recorded in Toccoa, our home base of sorts, and at the all-ages club



club that we ran at the time, called "The Dish." We really wanted to promote music in our tiny southern town, and The Dish was our way of doing just that. We brought in both local and touring bands, some of whom later became known on a national scale. As a side benefit, we were able to essentially stay at home and reap the benefits of getting to know a lot of other bands without needing to do a lot of traveling.

Like so many other bands, The Shroud began to experience its own inner turmoil. The four of us were starting to differ in our personal and musical visions and we made the decision to split up. We were scheduled to play at I.S. Fest in Atlanta in the summer of '93, and we determined to make that show our farewell to our small group of fans. What actually happened prior to playing this festival was that by taking a break from the band we found that we really missed it and each other's company. We played that last show and realized that the four of us had something special. Perhaps not earth-shattering, but certainly significant. Before the festival had concluded, we had determined to get back together, recanting of our decision to end the band.

It wasn't too long before we decided to give the band a complete make-over. We were going to make a break with our past and forge a new future. I can't remember exactly when it happened, but at some point Lee suggested that we re-name the band "Luxury". I'm pretty sure that this suggestion was not met with unanimous enthusiasm, but the idea and the name stuck.

By the summer of 1994 we had recorded another demo, called (rather simplistically) "the pink tape," as it was a cassette with a nifty pink cover. Several of these songs would appear on our first official full-length album. We made the fateful decision to drive to Cornerstone Festival that summer, and make the attempt to play the impromptu stage where we might showcase ourselves for Tooth and Nail. We really had no interest in any other label at the time because we were so impressed by the bands on the T&N roster.

We drove to Cornerstone in a borrowed Ford station wagon. After arriving, Glenn promptly had an epileptic seizure; only the second that he had ever had. Obviously, this was neither a good omen or a great way for Glenn to spend his first day at C-stone. We spent the remainder of the festival meeting people and trying to promote Luxury person to person, as much as possible. We managed to meet Jeff Cloud, who was (and is) very cool, as well as some members of Blenderhead, as I recall. After multiple unsuccessful attempts to be selected to play the impromptu stage, we were finally picked. It was the last day of the festival, and we had actually planned on leaving that morning. We opted to stay and try one last time, and found ourselves on stage in the blazing sun at 1:30 in the afternoon. I don't believe that we played all that well, but I think Lee really put on a good show. The Blenderhead guys really liked it, and Brandon Ebel seemed quite impressed. He took us aside and offered us a deal right after we were done playing. It was quite a memorable moment for all of us, I think. I drove back to Georgia that night, taking Glenn with me, along with Zach and Russel from Joe Christmas.

We began recording *Amazing and Thank You* in October of 1994, at Neverland Studios. Steve Hindalong produced and Chris Colbert engineered. This was an incredible experience for me. Steve had been a long-time musical hero of mine, and working with him and Chris was simply fantastic.

In support of the new album, we spent part of Spring 1995 touring with The Prayer Chain. Again, this was an incredibly formative experience for us, getting to know these guys who would continue for years after to be influential as friends and fellow musicians.

Everything changed for us after our first trip to Cornerstone as a Tooth and Nail band, in the summer of '95. We were gathering momentum at that point, playing a lot of shows and planning to expand into regular touring. We were becoming a professional band. We played to a packed tent at Cornerstone, and felt that we had really arrived. On our way back to Georgia, however, our driver lost control of the van that several of us were in, and rolled it across the median of I-57 in Illinois. What followed was

months of recovery for my brother Lee and Glenn, along with a lot of soul searching. Both Lee and Glenn suffered severe injuries in the accident, and the band was sidelined until we could decide how to continue, if we were going to continue at all.

By the spring of '96, after we all had a chance to recuperate and consider life as a touring band, we began writing again. The result of this was *The Latest and the Greatest*, which was recorded outside of Athens, Georgia in the summer of 1996. Not too long after this, we went on what would be our second and final tour as Luxury, teaming up with Morella's Forest. By the end of 1997, we were starting to drift in different directions once again. We still played occasional shows. For the most part, we lived near each other and were able to continue working together on a basic level, but it was becoming obvious that we weren't going to pursue the band and a mutual career in music the way that we had originally conceived.

In 1998, however, we got the itch to record a few songs. We had previously parted ways with Tooth & Nail, partly due to our vision for a band/label relationship (which Tooth and Nail did not necessarily share) and partly due to our own inexperience and naiveté. Long time friends David Vanderpoel and Marty Bush had started a label called "Bulletproof" to which they were beginning to sign bands. We began talking to them about our interest in releasing another record, and they brought us on board. We recorded what we call the "self-titled" album with Matt Goldman at our studio in Toccoa and at his in Atlanta, starting in late 1998 and stretching into 1999. Matt did a fantastic job capturing our sound, helping us to do justice to the new songs that were literally coming to life as we recorded them. As a side note, we ended up buying back about 1,000 copies of this album when the distributor went bankrupt. I still have those CD's stored away, and we still sell a few now and then.

By 2001, Luxury had become a side-project to our lives. Up until this point, all of us except Glenn had remained in tiny Toccoa, Georgia. Glenn had relocated a few years previous to Asheville, North Carolina, which wasn't too far from Toccoa. But by 2001, Lee was preparing to move to the Kansas City area, and Chris had begun to consider his options. I had been playing in another band, Canary, that had more-or-less evolved out of my continuing desire to make something out of my musical ambitions. Canary later became They Sang As They Slew, and we signed with Northern Records. Even so, Luxury remained alive in a very small way.

In 2003, Lee suggested that we try to put out an EP, and offered three song ideas to work on. What actually happened was that Northern offered to release a full-length record instead, if we could assemble the songs. Lee went to work writing, and I began the process of recording what was to become *Health & Sport*, which was released by Northern in 2005. In the process, we brought on Matt Hinton (of Piltdown Man) to play guitar and fill out the sound. These recording sessions were the last time that Luxury assembled in its entirety.

All of us have remained active in music on some level, whether by releasing music by way of other bands or simply by continuing to play generally. Glenn, who continues to suffer from epilepsy, has tried to keep active playing drums with friends locally, as well as by introducing his oldest son Nicholas to the world of rock music. Chris is now Father Christopher, an ordained priest in the Orthodox Church in America. He still occasionally is able to pick up a bass guitar and make music, though his calling as a pastor and a father and husband leaves little time for such activities. Lee and I have both continued to write music and release it. Lee works under both "All Things Bright And Beautiful" and "Orient Is His Name", releasing music both through Northern and the [bandcamp.com](http://bandcamp.com) site. I worked with They Sang As They Slew (a.k.a. Canary, a.k.a. The Canary Islands, and so on) for over ten years, releasing albums under our own imprint (The Cut & Paste Collective) and on Northern Records, as well as on [bandcamp.com](http://bandcamp.com). Lee and I are also attending St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, where we are each pursuing ordination and our master's degrees.

All of which brings us up to 2011.

**When did you guys sign with TnN records, and how young of a label were they at that time?**

We signed with T&N in 1994 at Cornerstone Festival. They were fairly new at the time. I believe that *Amazing and Thank You* was something like release number twelve. So we were a part of that initial phase of the label, I suppose.

**What were some of the primary obstacles that you had to overcome as a band back in the 90's?**

In some ways, to be a band in the 90's was tougher than it was prior to and after that time. We were on the cusp of the revolution that the internet was about to bring, and we couldn't see it happening at the time. When we started, bands like us were primarily concerned with recording at a dinky, 8-track studio and putting out cassettes or 7-inch vinyl. We would use our land-line phones to call around for gigs (cell phones were essentially unheard of), and we would play to audiences that had no way of knowing who we were prior to us coming to their venue. There was no MySpace or Facebook or such. There were 'zines and proper magazines, and if you were good enough or edgy enough (or both), then you had a shot at getting some exposure that way, but that was about it. This seems like such a constraint by today's standards, but in so many ways it was easier and simpler. These days, nearly anyone can release anything at the click of a mouse or the push of a button. We are utterly inundated by useless, average, unnecessary music, and the good music often is lost in the shuffle, literally.

To find cool music at that point of time (the 90's, before the internet took over) was like finding a treasure. It was a challenge, and you valued your music collection accordingly. These days, music has become disposable due to the ease and abundance of recordings available. Music has truly become a product in so many ways. Gone are the days of sifting through the cutout bin at Camelot, and I (for one) miss those days.

In the 90's, bands faced less of a challenge to be heard. It was still by no means easy to get the attention of a record label, but the musical landscape was a far cry from where things are today. The rule of the day in the 90's was "adaptation". Suddenly, we were starting to book shows via email, which was entirely novel at the time. The music industry was in transition from analog to digital, from cassettes and vinyl to CD, and eventually to MP3. Music videos, which had previously been the domain of major label acts, were now becoming common for even small bands. Because of all of this, the demands on bands became much greater. We had chosen to "make our stand" in a small town in Georgia, making it that much more difficult for us to meet these demands.

Regardless, we were able to release multiple albums essentially on our own terms. We were never terribly successful according to the standards of the music industry, but we made decent art and tried to manifest the creativity that had been given to us by God.

**After leaving TnN records you guys signed with Bulletproof, correct? Why did you leave TnN for another label?**

We didn't get along all that well with Tooth & Nail. Some of that might be legitimately blamed on the fact that we had spent so long working from the D.I.Y. perspective. We liked T&N initially because in so many ways it fit our preconceptions of a musical community. The bands on the label at that time tended to see themselves as "Tooth & Nail bands". We certainly understood ourselves in this way. We had always liked labels that

presented themselves in this manner, such as Dischord, Adult Swim, Teenbeat, Merge, and so forth. I suppose these days that sort of thing is simply called "branding". We had strong "punk rock ethic" tendencies, and lacked the experience needed to deal with a label that was heavy on the business side, as T&N was. There is nothing wrong with being heavy on business, it just didn't suit us as it turned out. We were far too casual in our approach, though I would hardly call Luxury a group of slackers. We simply had our own time frame, our own ideas concerning bands and labels, and these didn't mix well with T&N.

I think that Bulletproof, specifically David Vanderpoel and Marty Bush, had known us for so long and had worked with us that we didn't have these sorts of problems. We were all from Georgia, and I think we had a more similar mindset, by comparison with our relationship with T&N. We were a different band and different people by the time we signed with Bulletproof, as well.

We used to give T&N a lot of grief over what we saw as their failure to be what we thought that they should be. As time has passed, I think that T&N were simply acting like a business and we didn't care for their methods. I think that the fruit of their vision has been to become more marginalized and to sign ever more bland bands that sell lots of records. Not that all the acts are bland. Just most of them.

**Back in the early days of TnN, there were so many great bands, but it also seems that the label oversaturated the industry to some degree with so many acts and not all were of the highest caliber. Did you feel that Luxury got lost in the shuffle to some degree?**

It was really up to Luxury to stand out, and due to some circumstances beyond our control and some that we had control over and chose poorly, we failed to gain the audience that we had at one time hoped to gain. T&N had a lot of faith in us initially, but we simply weren't on the same page. They saw our potential, perhaps more than we saw it, but we were unable to capitalize on their faith in us quickly enough to make anything of it. T&N signed a lot of acts at that time (at least this was so from our perspective) and I think that we did eventually get lost in the shuffle. But, hey, that's business.

**Working as friends can be difficult to some degree, how was it being in a band and working together as brothers?**

If there is anything that I miss about Luxury, it is the wonderful comradery that we shared. There were so many good times that we spent together, most of which I utterly took for granted at the time. There is nothing like working to make art with your friends. When the creative muse hits, and you all find yourself in sync, all the gears mesh and the stars align, and then you all sort of look around at each other and try to suppress the grin that's spreading on your face because what you just played was absolutely amazing... there is nothing like it. You all struggle to give birth to this idea... you fight and argue and things begin to turn ugly... and then you try to make the song happen one more time. And then it happens. I miss this, both with TSATS and with Luxury.

As far as working with Lee is concerned, it could be difficult because he is demanding, sort of specific, and yet sort of vague, presenting a moving target musically that we needed to hit in order to meet his demands. But when everything clicked and we found that he was digging what we were doing, we were rewarded by his enthusiasm, which was a very good thing. For Lee, "close" was never good enough. He's difficult to please, but if you



were able to create something that worked for him, then you probably had created something pretty good.

Having said that, consider the fact that he's my brother. My *younger* brother. I'm a bit of a hot-head, and so Lee probably suffered more from our working relationship than I did. I miss being able to work with Lee like we used to in the early days of Luxury.

**Do you consider music to be just music, or do you consider it to be art and therefore consider yourselves to be artists?**

I think that we as musicians make music, and that we make art. There is high art and low art and everything in between. I think that we were trying to make something that was truly art, knowing that it would simply be the sort of art that's simply in between. These days, so many musicians simply want to make a buck. Can you blame them? I'd like to make a buck. I think that I may have made more money from my music since I stopped trying to make a career of it than I did when I was really trying. Strange. Luxury was really about making art in one sense, and about simply writing a good rock song in another sense. We were artists in the sense that one cannot help but be an artist if he makes something artistic. Were we true artists or good artists? I have no idea. We literally gave blood, sweat and tears for our art. Maybe that makes us true artists. I really can't say.

**Do you guys feel that music can bridge a gap spiritually, or do you feel that it is purely a form of entertainment?**

Well, I am Orthodox Christian, and for us such discussions are more about "both/and" and not so much "either/or". There is nothing that humans do that is exclusively physical or exclusively spiritual. We are physical and spiritual beings in totality and simultaneously. I can't compartmentalize what I did as a rock musician on stage from who I am the rest of the week. Likewise, I can't compartmentalize what I do at church from what I do on stage or elsewhere. Our music is doing something, whether we want it to or not, both to us and to those who listen. We are responsible for every word that proceeds from our lips, and (I would add) every note that screams from our amps. That being the case, in order for us to be living authentically and consistently our music would have to somehow reveal the truth of Christ within us. If I am singing lyrics that are totally out of sync with what I believe, then perhaps there is something worth re-thinking there. At one time TSATS was considering covering Depeche Mode's "Blasphemous Rumors", simply because it was such a powerful song. But how could I justify singing those words? How could I actually say such angry things about God that I didn't feel or believe? That was a line that I drew for myself. It would have rocked, but it would have failed to live up to my own personal rule of authenticity.

**What is the responsibility (if there is one) of an artist when it comes to Christians playing music? What I mean is do you feel there is a responsibility with message, content, etc. as it relates to faith?**

Our relationship to Christ, which should be a transformational relationship (one in which we are transformed by Christ), should inform our art. I would stop short of suggesting any sort of standard for lyrics or content or style or whatever. My priest has a saying that he uses: "Bless that which is blessing." To be blessing, something must be able to be offered to God in order that it might be made truly good. If what you do is blessing, then it should be done in a way that it is consistent with our transformation in Christ. I think of the scripture in James that questions whether both salt water and fresh water can come from the same source (James 3:11). Usually, this is used to correct someone's tendency to use foul language. I think that for Christian musicians, our responsibility is to be authentic. We need not write hymns and we need not feel guilty about writing loud or obnoxious songs. But we should see that everything that we do must be informed by the transformation

that has occurred in us. If we have "put off the old man" then why would play music that merely reflects that same "old man" that we have supposedly shed?

Having said that, I would be quick to say that most so-called Christian music simply turns me off. So much of it tries too hard to be "spiritual" and fails to be anything more than sappy words. Others become cynical and drift away from their roots as Christians, perhaps for legitimate reasons, and their music portrays a loss of faith that does little to help anyone and perhaps harms some.

My concept of authentic, honest "Christian" song writing (please understand that I use that term hesitantly) would loosely follow the pattern of the Psalms. The Psalm writers many times would question what was happening around them. They would lament the ills of the world and the falseness of men (even supposedly Godly men). They would even cry out to God, asking "why?". But they, as a whole, turn their focus back towards God, recognizing that in a broken universe, He is the one consistent, unchanging fact of our existence, and that, ultimately, He is good, indeed the only true "good" that we can know.

Like the Psalm writers, we can lament and expose the falseness of the world around us. We can sing about the darkness and we can weep and cause others to weep. But at the end of it all, if we are not sharing the light and hope of Christ within the context of our art, then we are failing as Christian artists.

<http://www.tsats-theresistance.blogspot.com/>

<http://theysangastheyslew.bandcamp.com/>

<http://www.leebozeman.com/>

<http://allthingsbrightandbeautiful.bandcamp.com/>

<http://orientishisname.com/>





# LESLIE DUPRE-GRIMAUD

in the webs of a weeping willow

Interview by Steve Ruff

There is something that is really moving to me about an emotionally charged female voice. I don't know if the music industry is so dominated by male vocalists that I just like a strong female vocalist when they come along, or maybe they bring something to the table musically that the guys just don't have. I don't know what it is exactly but I have always been moved by people like Hope Sandoval, Kate Bush, Annie Lenox, PJ Harvey and Jonnette Napolitano to just name a few. There is something mystical about a strong female voice that is enhanced, broadened and inspired by great music.

Leslie DuPre-Grimaud has the kind of voice that combines the strength of the above mentioned artists and elevates it to a completely different level. I can say with all honesty that I cannot think of anyone else that has the voice she does – she is that good. Her music accomplishes what few can in that it is such a powerful thing that it feels almost spiritual at times. When someone this good comes along I am surprised that they have not broken out in some type of broader success. You've no doubt heard her voice in the background on many of the artists that we cover here at Down The Line. She has worked with some of the best artists in the industry, but recently she has been given the

opportunity to showcase her voice and talents on the Subdivision Records label.

Married to Herb Grimaud Jr. of Stranger Kings and Sound Gallery (as well as The Violet Burning, Raspberry Jam and The Kreedowns), Leslie is hands down one of the most powerful female vocalists that I can think of...period! She was previously in the band Café Noire where she defined their sound with her haunting, deep and mesmerizing vocal style. In addition to her music Leslie also has a intriguingly dark and poetic style to her lyrics which describe and detail the human condition in a very mystical and intensely profound manner. This is true art, music that motivates and moves from a very deep place.

**Can you give me a detailed history of Café Noire...who was a member, when you guys started, who was in the band, songs/lyrics credit, etc?**

In the fall of 1987 musician Mike Brown placed an ad in the local Recycler..."Looking for a female singer influenced by Cocteau Twins and Kate Bush." I responded to the ad. Later Mike & I met for coffee at a Denny's restaurant. He was easy going and explained that he was looking for an artistic musical collaboration with a female vocalist. I proved to be that female collaborator by singing

along with Kate Bush on a cassette player in front of him.

Café Noire was a 4-track band. Mike played synthesizers, guitar, and drum machines. I was given free reign to sing, write lyrics, and write the vocal melodies. A truly great gift for a small town girl who graduated from the dry windy deserts of Yucca Valley CA.

Café Noire evolved throughout its 5 year life span. My best friend, Danielle Mercado, would join the band playing bass, along with my twin sister Lorri Myers who would also sing. Later, Mel McGowan would join on guitar and bass and introduce me to the love of my life, the one & only Mr. Herb Grimaud, who was only 16 years old at the time.

**Can you give me a list of other artists you have collaborated with, and what recordings you have been on?**

Musically I can't honestly say that I've collaborated with many artists over the years, however I did collaborate with Derri Daugherty and Steve Hindalong on a 2 song demo of my material "Monica" & "Who Was It". It was a very wonderful, humbling experience and I'm so grateful that they offered for free, their studio & time.

As far as recordings, I've been blessed to sing background vocals on:



\* *At the Foot of the Cross Vol. 1*  
 \* *Honey - Lost on You*  
 \* *The Prayer Chain - Shawl*  
 \* *Raspberry Jam - Oceanic & their first demo*  
 \* *The Violet Burning - Chosen & Demonstrates Plastic & Elastic*  
 \* *The Keepdowns - Take a Spin*  
 \* *The Sound Gallery - Designed For Reading*

**Vocally, who are your musical influences?**

My influences have always been the truly compelling, gutsy, alto-rich vibratos of singers such as Annie Lennox, Alison Moyet and Patsy Cline. They sing it like they mean it with a kind of conviction that sends shivers down the ladder of your spine. Other unique stylish artists such as Kate Bush, Elizabeth Fraser and Lisa Gerrard convinced me to embrace the vocal arts as an instrument. These individuals, unique unto themselves, are riveting - the mystery they create vocally is mesmerizing.

**Do you also write the music for your newest tracks (Clover, Raven's Song)?**

Yes. All my material was written on my little cheap keyboard in my office. I'm a huge fan of transposing and simple chord progressions. Andy Prickett and Herb are responsible for the production. Andy does a lot of the heavy lifting (engineer, guitars, programming, etc). I'd be lost without their expertise.

**How is the recording for Locust coming along, and will that be along the same lines stylistically as your other tracks? I saw on your face book page that Andy and Herb had recorded drum tracks, what direction will the song be heading in musically?**

"Locust" is taking shape nicely. The song is by all standards... a ballad. Musically and stylistically the approach will be familiar. We're still working out ideas. What's best for the song will ultimately take precedent, one of the many reasons why I love working with Andy and Herb.

**How do you define/categorize your music?**

I probably describe my music as visceral. I want people to see the stories I'm telling because that's what the songs are, they're short stories about a time, place, an experience. I'd like listeners to see the smudge of the fingerprint left behind on the glass, so to speak, but most importantly to relate to the song as if it were their own. I believe we've all drank from the same cup, our heartaches and even the trenches we've dug. If I sing about the fractured spirit of a broken man I saw sitting alone on a bus bench and everything his weary shoulders told me about his life, I want people to see him too.

**Lyricaly, your approach is poetic, do you write when you are not recording, and if so, have you ever thought of sharing what you**

**write?**

I'm constantly writing and entertaining ideas on notebook paper. Problem is... all the static in my brain. TOO much traffic if you know what I mean. Sure, I'd like to share what I write, but only if it's effective and purposeful. Writing is maddening in a way. I can think of 15 different ways to destroy a sentence. Case and point : "She hissed, she haggled, she howled..." "Was it a hiss? Or was it a howl? Was SHE haggling?" Maddening indeed.

**Can you tell the story behind the lyrics for your last 2 songs, they are exceptionally written.**

The story behind the lyrics for "Clover" was inspired by feelings of fear and isolation. Some anger as well. That, and a ghostly black & white dream I had running through a field late at night, gave breath to the song. I was so proud of Andy, Steve R, Jesse Nason, and Herb on that second chorus. MAN... it was like the death-kick, inspiring!!! When I put the headphones on to record the background vocals, they didn't have to tell me to go for it because I was already there. Back in that field of fire, the heavens blacker than black and pricked with stars.

"Raven's Song" came about quickly within 20 minutes with the help of my twin sister Lorri. The song is about the desire to forget what's painful. Hence the line "Amnesia wrap me in your wings." That a person might do most anything to get away from emotional pain. They might steal or bleed or claw (self-medicate) just for the momentary bliss of forgetting.

**Have you ever considered putting out songs that are acapella?**

Most definitely. Would love to. I've spoken to Andy and Herb about it. I'm sure at some point we'll have something along those lines.

**Do you consider your music to be "art", or do you classify "art" and "music" separately?**

I view music as an artistic expression of one's ideas, opinions, beliefs, etc. Therefore I consider art and music as one in the same.

**In my opinion your music is very comparable to the people that you cited as musical influences. Your voice is emotionally charged, very rich and dense, and the mood that comes through can be very dark and/or very uplifting, both are great and very tangible when listening. Do you think that your music and the supernatural interact with each other, or do you see them as separate entities?**

Because music is such a powerful force in my opinion there is little doubt that both coincide. As queer as it might sound to some, when creating a song or recording it, I live for

those moments when the guarded walls unconsciously fall away. It's like traveling through time. A flood of strength or great emotion never visible in my daily life takes over.

**In addition to your musical influences, are there particular influences for you in literature art and film? If so, can you elaborate on those and why they are important?**

Literature... (smiles) Does Dr. Seuss count? I love rhymes, sounds and plays on words. He was a huge influence in my tender years and no doubt still influences me today. I also enjoy reading L.M. Montgomery. Nowadays I'm more prone to ransacking crime paperbacks from the local grocery store than rifling through endless isles at the local library.

Art... Johannes Vermeer's painting 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' haunts me and is a favorite. I could have a conversation with those eyes. My twin sister's (Lorri J Myers) acrylic paintings move me as well.

Film favorites : "Somewhere in Time", "The Whole Wide World" and "Remains of the Day". I adore period pieces, I suppose they feed the romantic in me. I'm also fond of dusty Westerns with their panoramic wide open spaces, shoot-em' up justice and rustic homesteads.

The David Lynch film "A Straight Story" with actor Richard Farnsworth... talk about the power of love! That movie means so many different things to me, one in particular it reminds me to never underestimate others.

**Do you think it is possible that in the near future your tracks "Monica" and "Who Was It" might end up on bandcamp along with "Raven's Song" and "Clover"? Any chance that any Cafe Noire material might get a re-release?**

"Monica" would be easy to get on bandcamp but "Who Was It" will need to be transferred from DAT to digital before we can do that. At some point it will make it onto the site. We would like to remaster both tracks before getting them online.

Regarding Cafe Noire, Herb recently got some of the tapes from Mike Brown to put on bandcamp. A friend of ours will do a little bit of cleaning up on the cassettes before getting them online.

**I know that Herb does "lists" and those are always fun... what are Your top 10 favorite albums?**

Will a top 11 favorite songs do? Not necessarily in this order (I'm sure there are plenty more. This is just off the top of my head):



# JOEY TAYLOR

## TALKS TO DOWN THE LINE ABOUT ALL THE CLASSIC REISSUES THAT ARE COMING OUT

Interview by Steve Ruff

There are so many great reissues that have come out in the last few months! Bands like Crumbacher, Undercover, Bloodgood, Vengeance Rising and so many more have had new life breathed into them and come out of the gates swinging with extra tracks, t-shirts and even some bands playing again live! I have been curious for a good bit of time about who owns what, will there be re-releases, and how the whole ball of wax comes together. I was talking to Brian Healy one day and asked him about it the Frontline re-issues, he told me to catch up with Joey Taylor and he could probably help me out. Thankfully, Ojo was all in and was more than happy to explain the whole thing. In addition to having Undercover's Branded album reissued, Taylor has also been busy playing another reunion show in January, teaching and now he is also heading up the artist relations department at Meis Music Group.

### Who actually owns the Frontline catalog?

As far as I understand things, Frontline was acquired by a gentleman by the name of Buddy Killen a while back. Buddy died some years ago and the catalogue is now owned by the heirs of his estate. I did not know Buddy, and I have no ownership interest in this, but have agreed to get involved only because I know so many of the artists, many of whom were working at the same time we were, and I know and believe in the main people involved in the re-release and I thought this was a good cause all the way around.

### What was behind the decision to re-release at this point?

I think there was a situation where there were all of these great album masters and songs basically sitting around not doing any good for anyone. At the same time once the whole digital distribution thing started spreading and file-sharing and all, many of the albums were being illegitimately sold and shared online and when that happens, even if it's being done by the artists themselves, there are people who should be getting paid who aren't. That list could include the artists themselves, the rightful owners of the masters, people who may have played on the album who are entitled to a royalty, songwriters, and publishers. I know that there are sites that make Undercover's catalogue available, for

example, and we don't get paid for those sales. So legitimacy was a driving factor.

Second, once the decision was made to re-release the catalogue, my long-time friend Adel Meisenheimer who used to work at Maranatha! Music and then as an independent publisher and administrator for many, many other labels including Brainstorm, was called in to oversee things. The new catalog is being released on her imprint, Meis Music Group. There was a genuine desire on everyone's part not only to release the catalogue and make money, but to put this in the larger context of serving the artists and using these releases to further their ministries and careers, whatever that might happen to be for each artist. The first contact we made with everyone had this purpose at the forefront. So it had a future component to it too, not just backward-looking, historic or nostalgic.

Third, underlying all of this is the idea of good stewardship. Legal ownership cannot simply be usurped. The legal and rightful owners, writers, publishers, artists, distributors and other rightful partners are the ones responsible for overseeing the legitimate sales of the music and they are the ones entitled to compensation. I know most of the fans don't realize or understand the legal and business side of how this works, but when music is distributed illegitimately, even when it looks official or is done by the recording artists themselves, there are people whose economic and legal rights are being infringed on. The rightful owners and administrators are also forging alliances with other partners to find more ways to market the music, get it placed in television and film for example, so stewardship is another important driver.

### Will the entire catalog be re-released?

I don't know that every single title will be released, but most of them will be. Even as we speak, most of the titles have been put into the system digitally and are available on iTunes. Another component of this of course is making sure all the illegitimate distribution channels are ordered to take down their unauthorized streaming and downloading operations. Again, sometimes that includes the artists and their websites themselves. Not always, because some of the artists like Tourniquet, genuinely own their whole

catalogue. There are other artists who legitimately own their own stuff too. At least going forward people can trust that the music they buy from the Frontline artists and other artists who may contract with Meis Music Group is being sold legitimately and that the right people are getting compensated for those sales.

### How will this actually affect the artists themselves, will they see any of the money?

Yes, the artists will see money, some of them for the first time. The decision was made in most cases to wipe out recoupment accounts (money the artists have to reimburse the label for, for recording costs and other loans and advances they may have received, before they can receive royalties) and increase royalty rates so that the artists could start receiving money right out of the gate, from the first record sold, and at a rate higher than they would have under their original deals. It was a generous, genuine, and unilateral act of good faith by the owners and administrators of the label.

### Will all releases be pre-orders as the first few have?

No, not all. Only some of the titles are being made available in CD format. Most will be distributed and marketed digitally.

### Do you own all the rights to the Broken/Brainstorm catalog?

When I left Brainstorm Gene and I kind of divided up the pie, so to speak. There are a number of titles from the Broken / Brainstorm catalogue that I own and the rest Gene's estate owns. Some of that will be re-released legitimately. *Branded* for example, is being re-released this month as a 25th Anniversary Special Edition on Innocent Media, the label I started after I left Brainstorm, administered by Adel and Meis Music. I think over the next year a number of those Brainstorm titles including all the Undercover stuff will see the light of day again also. Gene's father and I have a good relationship and the same motivation for legitimacy and stewardship holds for both of us as well.

### Who does actually own the rights to Adam Again's catalog?



That's a good question and I'm not sure I'm the right guy to answer that one. As far as I know, Gene sold all the Adam Again masters to Buddy Killen a long time ago. I don't know if that included all of the Adam Again records or just a few. There are some Adam Again recordings though, like *The Broken Christmas*, owned jointly by Gene's estate and me, that were not part of that sale. The ones you see come out on the Meis Music Group imprint though are the ones that they own and again, people can trust that those are legitimate sales.

I want to thank Ojo for taking the time out of his super busy schedule to fill us in on what is happening with the reissues. This does however bring me to a very valid concern that I would like to address. The music that we cover here at Down The Line is important to so many people. The industry has typically been slanted towards the label, especially years ago when the whole business was so different. These are important artists, important releases and a lot of work has gone into these albums for a long time. PLEASE, do what is right and purchase these albums. Don't rip, burn, copy and share these with your friends. It is long past time that these artists get the proper compensation due for their work and their art. It is a different day and age when it comes to technology, but use the available tools for something positive and help to put the money back in the pockets of the artists.

<http://www.meismusicgroup.com>

## [DUPRE-GRIMAUD CONTINUED]

- \* Jorge Reyes "Plight"
- \* Tones on Tail "Burning Skies"
- \* Hunters & Collectors "Talking to a Stranger"
- \* Gary Numan "Cars"
- \* Yaz "Winter Kills"
- \* The Innocence Mission "Black Sheep Wall"
- \* Dave Gahan "Saw Something"
- \* Depeche Mode "Nothing's Impossible"
- \* Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds "The Ship Song"
- \* The National "Bloodbuzz Ohio"
- \* 16 Horsepower "Burning Bush"

Anything that you would like to add that I might have missed or that you want people to know?

I like Boston Baked Beans candies.

[subdivisiontheory.com/leslie-dupre-grimaud/](http://subdivisiontheory.com/leslie-dupre-grimaud/)  
<http://lesliedupregrimaud.bandcamp.com/>

## [CRUMBÄCHER CONTINUED]

management and educating them about all avenues of promotion for their music while retaining their rights and publishing. Being a musician myself, I understand the need to create and how fulfilling that process is. We try to help as many artists as we can in their pursuit of being a career musician.

I also ran a non-profit, Open Arms – a community house in Grand Terrace, CA. The purpose of the house was to be a resourceful place for young adults by inviting them into our lives, providing a living space to those who needed it – and showing how service to others could help make a difference in themselves and others. The most we had living in the house was 15 people at a time! We had to shut it down in 2009 due to lack of funding. It was a rewarding experience. I still maintain a strong relationship with many of my "kids" and appreciate the opportunity to be "mom" to so many over the past few years.

<http://www.facebook.com/openarms1>. I now live with my parents at their ministry house, Missionary Kids Ministries. I enjoy helping them in their ministry to MK's as well. My brother, Jimmy Wisner is also very involved in helping with that ministry.

**Christopher:** I'll let the other guys tell you what they are doing. I'm still working in music, Big thanks to my wife Benilda, who puts up with my bulls\*\*t. Sometimes I make money, sometimes I don't. I am currently writing and producing music for ABC television. I used to have a band (after Crumbächer) with Dawn called Almost Ugly (Now available on iTunes) That was a blast! Oh yeah, writing ABC stuff with Dawn's son Chris Ryan currently, keeping it in the family!

**Is there a place for people to go and donate to help cover expenses, as well as to donate to the Lifequest Romanian Revolution ministry?**

We would love for people to donate to help cover expenses that were not met. We will have merchandise and show memorabilia available soon on our websites for a donation. Donations will cover show expenses and the proceeds will go to Romanian Revolution ministry.

Go to: [www.take2productions.net](http://www.take2productions.net) or [www.lifequestorganic.com](http://www.lifequestorganic.com) for more information.

[www.crumbacher.com](http://www.crumbacher.com)  
[www.myspace.com/crumbacher](http://www.myspace.com/crumbacher)  
[www.take2productions.net](http://www.take2productions.net)





# SUNGRAZERR

fuzzing out near the black bunny haven

Interview by Steve Ruff

You might recall that we reviewed a new Subdivision Records band named Sungrazerr last issue. I am completely infatuated with the sounds that come from this new act, and can honestly say that this is as new, fresh and unique as it gets. Subdivision has released some great stuff recently and I hope that they continue long into the future. I had a chance to catch up with the man behind the music, Dean Tompkins, and we got along really well talking about Sungrazerr, his other interests, and the mighty genre of heavy metal which we both love and is actually miles apart from the work he releases in Sungrazerr.

Dean is a native of California and lives in Costa Mesa with his wife and his son who is nearing the two year mark. After hearing the sonically warm and vibrant sounds of Sungrazerr I pegged Dean for a indie/shoe gaze kind of guy, but his scope is much broader than that. If you haven't checked out the Subdivision roster you really should, it has got to be the best newer label that is out there, and their acts are top notch!

**Have you played in any other bands or is Sungrazerr the first?**

Sungrazerr is actually a side project that I started with Dylan Hake. Dylan has played with a bunch of bands from Telegram to Set to Sea to Moi, and Dylan is also the drummer for Mammoth Thunderpower which is our 70's metal band that we do. It's our main project, just good old slow dark heavy metal. It's the greatest thing ever man...so, Sungrazerr was something I had always wanted to do because of my love for effects pedals. Dylan was a perfect fit, however he can get a bit busy with school, so the first EP is all me pretty much. So I guess to get back to your question, I also play in Mammoth Thunderpower. As far as past bands... ehfff, just grand ideas and fill in spots in other peoples bands.

**Mammoth Thunderpower huh??? Yeah, I**

**LOVE metal! Is there a website or a place to purchase those tunes, and can you give me a little background on the band (who, where, how long, releases, etc.)?**

Yes... Mammoth Thunderpower, we've been doing it for almost two years now, but the last year has been more serious. We are basic, heavy, hard slower metal. There are no releases as of now, but I'd say within the next six months we will be putting something out ourselves. The roster is me, Timm Nasario Daza (tattooist extraordinaire), Dylan Hake, Aaron Lockett and Chris Waffle. I guess you probably want our band names huh? Our band names are Deanstroyer, Sir Maximus Thunder, Boy Thunder, Salt and Pepper Leopard, and The Chrispocalypse. We have a face book page and all that and it's honestly the most fun I've ever had in a band.

**How did you come to be on the Subdivision label?**

I feel that I got really lucky with that man. I mean (this is gonna sound really funny) it's like a dream come true. I grew up with Andy as a mentor, I guess for lack of a better mentor.... (haha no, no I'm kidding). Andy was best friends with my brother growing up so he basically taught me how to play guitar. I always liked his music but I was more of a hardcore kid. I would raise hell at Prayer Chain shows...looking back I was so lame...jumping off of the PA speakers into the crowd and taking out some poor girl who was really worshipping and crying in the front row. I already knew Andy and Eric and I bonded over skateboards and aliens. Then you know, you grow up and life happens. We lost touch for a few years and when we did start talking again my musical tastes had expanded and so had theirs. So, we would send songs back and forth, you know, turning each other onto new bands and such. I ended up kind of helping manage some of the bands Andy has produced with Northern and started coming around his circles more. I also started helping Eric a little bit with Manta Rae, his clothing

and screen printing company, so it just kind of fit. I recorded the songs in my ThunderDen, which is my own little studio, then the EP was done and online. Those dudes said they were stoked on it and now it's a part of Subdivision. With the digital age upon us it can be that easy. I'd like to think that all the homemade mac and cheese that I made Andy was the real reason. He just wants food from me, so he keeps something over my head.

**I didn't know Eric had a clothing & screen printing company...?**

Eric has a company called Manta Rae. In the past 6 months I have been adding my two cents to move it into a new direction. We do a line of tees, just cool designs, and we also do contract printing with damn good prices if you ask me! We aim to try to help out bands with their merch. People don't realize how important merch is in keeping your band afloat. That is YOUR money, not the labels money, and the profit margin is great, so we do like package deals and try to help out bands (or any company for that matter). A couple hundred bucks gets you shirts and buttons and all that. If you don't know about screen printing and the whole process, you can end up spending a lot of money on crap and feel in the dark. We are just trying to give a little back.

**Where do you draw your inspiration, and what other bands do you consider to be an influence on Sungrazerr?**

Sungrazerr is about feelings... emotions.... .Andy really got me into the whole "music is a drug" thing and I wanted to see if I could really push that. Can I listen to a song and have my brain really, honestly make me feel high? I mean, that's what we are all chasing anyways right? The next high? Be it love, acceptance, instant gratification or whatever gets you off. Each song has its own different feeling or emotion due to whatever state of mind I was in while I was writing it.



I had the iPod on shuffle a while ago and "Humb" by The Prayer Chain came on. I then realized that that song alone may have planted this fuzz/drone seed in me. I also listen to Suicide, French Drain, and I love The Sound Gallery stuff, it can be so haunting and delicate at the same time....Herb is rad.

**So the whole "music is a drug" that Andy got you into... can you elaborate on that concept a bit?**

Music is a drug...yes indeed. There is a book called "This is your Brain on Music", and Andy turned me onto it. It basically explains that the human brain processes music like it processes drugs, the same chemical change happens. So think about it, think about how different music makes you feel different ways. It can totally hype you up, or totally drag you down. Your mood can make you crave different types of music.

It has actually changed the whole way I listen to all types of music, especially when you go see bands play. There is always some band playing that you don't know or haven't heard before. If you can't get some sort of enjoyment from them, or some sort of something, just bail. It's not worth it. Why take a drug that you aren't into? If you came and saw Sungrazerr and weren't into it, I would hope you would leave for your sanity. It wouldn't offend me.

**How do you describe the sound of Sungrazerr?**

Fuzzy...um....yeah....really, really fuzzy..... deep huh?

**What is the process for writing the music and how you bring it all together?**

Geez... it may be anything from a sound of a certain pedal, to a mood, ya know? I try not to rush it and really just do it when the feeling inspires me. It's always different so I might record some cool sounds outside, or from one of my sons toys with my phone. Then mic it and play it through a fuzz pedal...or I may have a little story in my head and I'll lay down a bass or guitar track and then just layer them up.

**Are you the sole member of Sungrazerr, or are there other people involved?**

Sungrazerr is my child but there are lots of people who make up Sungrazerr. As of right now it's mainly me and Dylan, but it's an open door policy.

**Do you play live or are there plans to play live at any point?**

We've only played live a few times with some loops pedals, an extra guitarist, a laptop, cool lights and a wall of amplifiers. I wouldn't use the word "loud" because there's a point when

your ears stop working and you start to feel the music in your chest. It's not for the weak, that's for sure.

**Will Sungrazerr ever have vocals or will you always be primarily the noise band that you are?**

Ha! You know I had this conversation last night actually. The simple answer is "sure, why not". There are no rules for Sungrazerr, I'm just going where it takes me because it's art. I may do some fuzzy country songs next or it may die tomorrow.

**Any other projects that came before Sungrazerr that are available?**

No not really...well there is something called Unicurse, but I don't know if I'm allowed to talk about it.

**So, what/who/huh is Unicurse? Since you don't know if you can talk about it, I feel compelled to ask.**

Unicurse is a darker project with some people. Secrecy is something that is lost in today's world. You can find out anything about anyone at anytime and it's sad really. People can let you know when they check into the yogurt shop...weird huh? So secret bands and secret societies are fun for us, that's about all I can say.

**Are there new Sungrazerr tracks and tunes in the works?**

Yep....Working on a few covers of doo-wop songs....no joke. Maybe gonna make a mixtape...you know, keep it street. Definitely going to work some live drums into the mix...by the way, I will NOT do some fuzzy country now that I think about it.

**Working on doo-wop covers??? Sounds very interesting...any idea when that may come out?**

Yep, doo wop covers. I love that type of music and I've always wanted to be in a cover band that kind of rocked out doo wop covers. I think we'd be a hit on the wedding circuit...but yeah, Sungrazerr doo wop....slow, fuzzy....it's really fun actually. I'll say they will maybe be out in a month or less. I usually release one song at a time and then group them together as an album or whatever. I'm very impatient and it's so easy to put stuff on bandcamp.

**Can you give me the history behind the song "Black Bunny Haven"? Where did the name and the inspiration for the song originate?**

Hahaha. It's kind of an inside joke between my wife and I. We live on the Westside of Costa Mesa which is a very ethnically diverse area. There's an apartment building in a somewhat rough area, and we always drive by

this one building that has a sign that says HAVEN on it...and a black bunny rabbit. No joke man, it makes no sense at all, like is that going to entice you to live that that place? I'll send you a picture of it. So I made up a story that it's some twisted bunny clone ranch and maybe the song is the programming inside of the head of one of the clones. That's not strange at all is it? (hehe). The sound you first hear is a noise box that was custom made by the **TONEBUTCHER**. ([www.tonebutcher.com](http://www.tonebutcher.com)). He actually makes most of my pedals and noise makers and fixes and rebuilds all of my amplifiers. I'm an all tube man, it takes some maintenance when you push them to 11 all the time.

**On the track "Elephants" there are noises that I cannot even identify, what do you use to create the soundscapes that the listener hears?**

You know that was my first Sungrazerr song that I had a collaborator on. Miles Rogers, who makes music under the moniker "Rainsword" (gonna be huge in the electronic music world), he did some of the effects on it. He's a bit more digitally savvy than me and I lean towards the analog. So really I don't know what he did with some of those sounds, but I also don't want to know. I do know that his house is right under where the airplanes take off from a local Airport. He records all kinds of good stuff and speeds it up, slows it down, and he also makes a lot of his own effects pedals. He's rad man and he just turned 18, crazy right?

**What is in your ipod/turntable/cd player right now?**

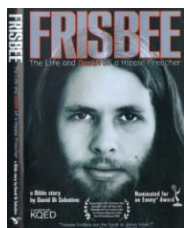
Tonight I was listening to the new Telegram EP, the new Crocodiles album, Russian Circles....also the new Dimmu Borgir album. There's a French Drain cassette tape in my player right now (drone stuff)...and I'm really, really into JBAP. They're Subdivision people too and I'm curious to hear what's next from them.

**So who are your top 10 favorite metal acts... and top 10 favorite other bands as well?**

Ok so top Ten Metal Bands.... hmmm...so it would span anything that falls under metal...okay: (besides Mammoth Thunderpower of course)

1. Motley Crue
2. Black Sabbath
3. Iron Maiden
4. Dio
5. Guns N Roses
6. Dimmu Borgir
7. Sleep
8. Pentagram
9. Goatsnake
10. Pistolero

Behemoth and Graveyard would be 11 and 12



# David di Sabatino:

“A follow up conversation: “Intent of the heart is everything”

Interview by Steve Ruff

Sometimes when we do interviews here at Down the Line we don't always come across as clear and concise as we intend, or sometimes it is not as clear and concise as the interviewee would intend or be happy with. Obviously we interview people whose work we appreciate and find merit in, but sometimes we like to offer a bit more insight and depth into a subject. Thus was the case with David di Sabatino from our last interview. David's films on Larry Norman and Lonnie Frisbee have been the subject of much debate and speculation, even to the point of attack and accusation. We are not drawing any lines in the sand here, just trying to offer again a bit more insight into a two complex films that encompasses just as much from an artistic standpoint as they do a spiritual standpoint. Hopefully we offer a bit more depth here in addition to what we ran in the last issue as well...think of this as the companion piece.

**From one of our emails you said, “Also...my docs aren't pussyfooting around. I am raising the possibility that Larry Norman was a fraud...” So along that line of thinking, obviously Norman didn't practice what he preached or what he confessed to believe, so where is the dividing line that makes him a fraud, or just another person who chooses to go after what he wants instead of living by what he knows is right? Maybe also, how would you define the term fraud?**

I realize that a lot of those looking in cannot understand how a guy that could write such music that stirred the heart toward God could possibly be called a “fraud.” And that is the problem. It is a tough story to tell precisely because you almost had to experience the darkness to understand this might even be possible. And none of us want to believe it possible because, well, who wants to live in such a dark and cynical zone. So, for some, I guess it is easier to believe this all a grand conspiracy, that we have all lost our minds and are spreading lies and gossip about Larry Norman. That denial in the face of such meaty evidence is really difficult to stomach. These folks simply are unable to separate the artist

from the art which is something you must do to understand this story.

Another group of people want to settle in to that familiar Christianese zone where all of us are sinners, and so, we shouldn't look at anyone else's sin different from our own. ...we're all fallen. ...we all do bad things. ...and God still loves us all anyway. And thus, Larry Norman was a mixed bag, broken like the rest of us and was trying to do good but he fell short of the mark.

This isn't that storyline either.

From the beginning there were people in my ear that were very hawkish about Larry Norman. They believed that he was an outright fraud projecting a false image to a bunch of people too awestruck to ask tough questions about behavior that was at best contradictory to his message and at worst was downright despicable and evil. Ultimately, so these hawks suggest, he was conning his audience out of their money and a position of influence. Not a particularly nice line of thinking, but when faced with the testimonies, when faced with a neglected child, when faced with a mother whose family was turned upside down, you start to believe that something was really off here.

As I began interviewing, the typical storyline was that there was almost complete and utter dissonance between what he was saying on stage and the image he was projecting to his fans and how we lived his life once he got down from that stage. Let's give the most glaring example in the movie. Rock stars having babies out of wedlock is not a particularly shocking revelation. But what is difficult to fathom is the amount of effort to push his own child and his mother away and to cast aspersions upon anyone that dared question this or other confounding behavior. And he did this over and over and over again in every situation where he was faced with taking any responsibility for his actions.

So, when faced with this kind of behavior, what other word do you have? Larry Norman got up on stage night after night singing songs with lines like “without love, you are nothing” all the while he was also plotting the

destruction of the lives and careers of those who'd drawn close to him and knowingly ostracizing his very own child. And as I dug, I found that this behavior was happening as early as the late 1960s but got progressively worse and worse and things spiraled downward. Having listened to people wonder aloud at the dissonance between the image he projected and fought so desperately to maintain and the gravity of the actions that were visited upon people he deemed his enemies, I took the notion raised by the hawks seriously, that Larry Norman was either a man who lost the narrative thread of whatever resonance he had with the Christian message, or he was someone who embraced that image as a wolf in sheep's clothing to con the faithful. And I present that as one of the themes in the movie, but my title for the piece tells you where I lean.

The word “fraud,” however, is a slippery one and needs some elaboration. It conjures up images of someone who is knowingly conning and duping, that they have from the beginning sat down and orchestrated the ruse with a full and conscious intent to beguile. I think this may be too shallow an observation. I think this story is much more complex than that.

Larry Norman was a very confused man. I take it some sort of traumatic event triggered this sort of behavior since it is out of tremendous pain that you settle in to such a world of your own making. And I think that his confusion blurred the lines of responsibility. In his head he was always the victim, even though it was obvious to anyone on the other end of his actions that he was very much the perpetrator. That doesn't excuse the behavior, or even make it explainable, but I think in his own confused way he believed he was being sincere and doing the right thing. In his mind, he was the evangelistic troubadour who went around the world spreading God's love. And he spent a lot of time telling you this in his liner notes and Phydeauxgrams to his fan base. All the actions he visited upon anyone that threatened to (or those whom he *thought* were going to) upset his carefully constructed reality were in some means a way of preserving the good that he did while up on stage. The problem for those of us on the



other end of his, let's call it "Larry Norman's survival mode," were experiencing what can only be described as evil.

What's all the more strange is that because some (certainly not all) evangelical Christians have bought into this sort of Faustian deal that posits as long as these imbalanced characters are ultimately bringing people to the Lord and sewing a positive message, none of the other stuff matters. I remember speaking with a guy who Larry obviously wronged very badly, and this guy swore me to secrecy because he didn't want to hurt Larry Norman's ministry. When I pushed him and inquired whether he thought keeping someone's lie to extend God's kingdom was a little bit backwards, the fellow broke off communication with me. And I wonder how keeping the silence helped Jennifer Robinson when she phoned up CCM magazine and told them about Daniel and how she needed to speak with Larry and get medical information. Larry wasn't returning her calls, but the powers that be at CCM magazine put them in contact with one another. And the very next year when Larry released his *Home at Last* album, they put Larry on the cover and said nothing about the child.

Getting back to the word "fraud," this might help explain the situation a bit. I recently saw a movie called *Who is Clark Rockefeller?* about a man who posed as a relative of the famous American family, and who managed to keep the charade for more than a decade before his wife finally caught on and turned him over to the authorities. The ending of the movie shows a scene where the exposed man sits in jail repeating over and over something to the affect of that he never meant to hurt anybody and that he had done everything to help others.

If you had come across this fellow during his heyday, he would have been completely immersed in his Rockefeller persona, so much so that the lines between reality and fiction were completely blurred. Somewhere along the line, this man actually starts to believe his own lie. In his mind, he *is* Clark Rockefeller. And he will take offense to anyone that tries to take that delusion away. In fact, he might even resort to the most heinous of crimes to make sure that nobody ever finds out his lie. The lie becomes reality, and that lie must be preserved at all costs.

What's saddest of all is they deceive themselves into believing the lie is helping people. So when you or anyone else comes to say, "Hey, this is all a lie," they look at you like you have two heads and wonder aloud why you cannot see how good they are and how much help they are to everyone. Frighteningly, the conclusion they draw is that you yourself are evil for wanting to stop all the help they are giving to others, and it is you that must be destroyed.

Now, nobody with any sense thinks that these people get away with anything. I didn't do this documentary because I felt that Larry had led a charmed life or had gotten away with the ruse. Nobody gets away with anything, and anyone that sews this kind of discord is a person in a lot of pain who continues to heap more pain on themselves the more they act this way. One of the great lines in M. Scott Peck's book *People of the Lie* describing the inner life of sociopathic behavior is that those looking for vengeance need to realize there is no temporal hell they could dream up to punish these "people of the lie" worse than the one that goes on every day in their heads. These are tortured individuals whose self-loathing is off the charts. But, while you want to have compassion for them, in no way does it justify their behavior or give them the right to silence others who simply wish to say that these things occurred.

So, the best you can say is that the good that he did to draw people to a closer relationship with God cannot be taken away from him, no matter how many doubts one might have about his sincerity. But the darkness that he put his hand toward to derail people's lives is of such vile nature that there is no other conclusion other than he was a sociopath whose actions offstage almost totally contradicted everything he spoke about on stage. That is what I found when I went down this rabbit hole. I am sorry that some wish this weren't true and would rather believe that myself or Mr. Stonehill have gone looney tunes. But that is the only way that I can make sense of all the evidence that I found.

I get that nobody enjoys hearing about this stuff. I didn't want it to be true either. And the evangelical Christian culture has a number of idiosyncrasies that all convince them that truth-telling of this nature is a bad thing to do no matter what the reasons. I honestly had no idea that the story held this kind of ending, and we tried just about everything we could to persuade Larry to simply come forward and answer some of this stuff. Following hard after the truth no matter where it leads you is not pretty sometimes. But the facts remain. This story is much worse than the Mike Warnke story.

**You also said in the email, "I think Matt raised an excellent question. Why am I falling over to support Lonnie and throwing knives at Larry. FINALLY, someone with the right question for me. That is a valid question...one that has a very well thought out answer as well." Can you tell me the answer and expound on it?**

Very simply, the intent of these two men's hearts were completely and utterly different. Look at the stories of Cain and Abel or King Saul and King David. God judges the intent of the heart and makes a differentiation based on that.

Lonnie was naïve in many ways. He was sort of a holy fool upon whom God poured out his spirit. He had a sincere desire to bring people to a God encounter. The sins he committed were consensual. And he paid the ultimate price for his sin by having to check out early at age 40.

I have no idea what Larry Norman's motivation was. I know what he said about himself, but this is a very dark Machiavellian character whose wheels are constantly moving to thwart others and to hide his tracks.

**3. For me as a viewer, I see Lonnie as one person with a particular set of circumstances, and Norman as a different person with an entirely different set of circumstances. The differences are vast and really the way I see it their stories do not have much in common other than they both professed Christ. What I mean by that without going too deep into explanation is that Lonnie found Jesus and wanted to be used and share the news, whereas it seems Norman found Jesus and wanted to capitalize on that and take what he wanted in the process, regardless of who got hurt. Kind of different issues, different reasons and therefore different responses...does that make sense? Can you explain from the director's point of view if you agree or disagree, and how that affected your slant on both films?**

I once told Larry that he reminded me a lot of Lonnie Frisbee. At the time, well before I had any inclination to document these lives, I meant that like Lonnie, Larry seemed to me a guy that couldn't see his own blind spots. Larry went ballistic on me.

I think there were a few similarities that I wasn't thinking of when I first said that.

When I first started the Larry story, I felt the stories would be very much the same. I don't know if this is just my own personal obtuseness, but when I first spoke with Randy Stonehill, I told him how I wanted to find the parallel to King David in Larry's life and do the same thing for him that I found in the Lonnie narrative, a man after God's own heart that struggled with some pretty heinous sin. I remember Randy just looking at me. I should have really taken that to heart. Because it just wasn't the same story. So I didn't try to make it what it wasn't. I just tried to tell what I found.

I remember being on the phone with my friend Sam from Toronto and saying to him how distraught I was that this story was so dour and dark. And he said, "You don't even want him to be this bad." And I didn't. One of the things that really bugs me about the lies that are being spread about my motivation is how much effort Pamela and I put in to trying to get Larry to come on and admit some of this stuff. We were fighting for this to have a

much better ending than this miasma that the family has raised. Wouldn't it have been great to have Larry explain some of this stuff, and just say he was sorry? I mean, isn't that what the essence of the faith is? And if what others who spoke with Larry are telling me is true, I think he wanted to do it at some points, but those waiting in the wings to take over the "family business" talked him out of it. They were convinced they were going to stop me from using the music and his image in the film. When that didn't happen, Plan B was to slur the people that were behind this.

Back to your question, yes, after a while I became very aware that this was a King Saul narrative, someone who had been given a position for a short season but was taken away from them because of lack of character. And instead of regrouping or making amends, he spends his days trying to mess up the lives of the people with whom he worked all the while pretending he is doing nothing of the sort for his ever decreasing coterie of fans who are desperate to believe the bulls\*\*t he continues to package and repackage.

The *Frisbee* film will continue to be an inspiration to people. *Fallen Angel* is a cautionary tale that will make you sad. But it needed to be done just the same. I just follow the storyline where it takes me.

**Also, I was very interested to hear you expound on what you said here... "we really need to stop lumping all sins together. Not all sins are created equally...as our good Catholic brothers will tell us...as the Bible suggests (with the sin against the Holy Spirit that is deemed unforgivable)." Can you elaborate on this?**

Many things point this out to us. If we are followers of Scripture, we get an inkling of it with statements like, "There are seven things the Lord hates, and six things that are an abomination." Or like I said above, that there is such a thing as the "unpardonable sin" tells us that not all sins are of equal gravity.

Also, if we believe that reason (or common sense) plays a part in our spiritual lives, as one of the pillars by which the Spirit teaches us, then it seems obvious that jaywalking is of a much lesser gravity than is murder. Our entire system of law is governed by weighing crimes based upon intent. If you premeditate murder it is called "first degree" and carries a much more serious punishment than does manslaughter.

Evangelicals love to say that all sin cuts us off from relationship with God, and that may be true in a generic sense. But we forget to follow through on the entire picture of sin, and fail to mention that there are very different temporal repercussions. Committing adultery is not the same as cheating on your taxes by claiming that you made \$75k instead of \$105k. In the former, innocents could be irreparably harmed as could both marriages. In the latter, you might have to pay a fine. Are those two sins really the same? In a very surface sense, yes, you broke the law. But the gravity of those two actions are very different and they carry with them two very different repercussions.

Most parents will have come up against this situation, one where the child has done something wrong and the parent has to "get to the bottom of it." You question the child, listen to the answers and make your judgment accordingly. A child with peanut butter smeared all over their face professing innocence poses a bigger problem than one with a clean face who admits stealing a lick.

Intent of the heart is everything. And many times, as humans, we can't see this. That is why people are loathe to judge a situation because of the difficulty to sometimes discern what Gollum might call "tricksy" people. But we make a mockery of Jesus's statements when we say that his line to "Judge not lest ye be judged" was advocating some amoral standoff that puts us all at an inability to say anything about what anybody does. That is just not what he is saying there.

To the contrary, Jesus's import is that *when* you make such judgments, do so by remembering that you too are susceptible, that you too are human, that there but for the grace of God go you and/or me. And when you remember that you too are human, you will then be in the right frame of mind to help someone see clearly by helping them remove the speck in their eye instead of blinding them with a fist to the eye.

In our situation we watched as Larry twisted this child in the wind for years before he died, even promised him on more than one occasion that he would make things right in his will. And we were hoping for the best, that Larry would come around and do the right thing. I remember speaking with Daniel before he went and met Larry in the UK in 2008, trying to help him put his mind in the best frame of reference to deal with such a difficult situation. But for whatever reason,

Larry continued to lie to this kid. And I have no idea why or what the reasons in his head were. But I do know that this behavior is so far outside the boundaries that it should raise huge questions about who he said he was. And if you think that God is on the side of the argument that we should silence this story rather than get behind a broken-hearted mother and abandoned child, then I will tell you that you are seriously deluded. And I invite you to come with me and sit in a room with Daniel Robinson and Jennifer Wallace and listen of what they experienced. God is always on the side of the oppressed and the victim. Always.

[www.lonniefrisbee.com](http://www.lonniefrisbee.com)  
[www.fallenangeldoc.com](http://www.fallenangeldoc.com)

## [SUNGRAZERR CONTINUED]

Okay, now the top ten bands... ??? Damn, that's gonna be rough...let's see:

1. Motley Crue
2. The Clash
3. Jawbreaker
4. Oasis
5. Smashing Pumpkins
6. Slade
7. The Murder City Devils
8. Jane's Addiction
9. Gorilla Biscuits
10. Russian Circles

Also, there's new stuff up on bandcamp... not complete but almost there...

<http://sungrazerr.bandcamp.com/>

I also want to give thanks and props to the following people for their part in helping me out and hooking me up with gear:

Tonebutcher Pedals  
 Armor Gold Cables  
 Jon Baxter Pickups

and of course my wife...

<http://www.subdivisiontheory.com/sungrazer/>  
<http://www.subdivisiontheory.com/>  
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/mammo-th-thunderpower/109386615766279>





## BILL MALLONEE

“With two new and impressive recordings released, Bill catches us up in his own words”

Here at Down The Line we really enjoy having contributing writers. When it comes to great writers and musicians, Bill Mallonee still tops that list... heck, he defines that list and sets the standard. Mallonee's output is the most prolific out of anyone I can think of in the industry. He still cranks out an unparalleled amount of songs that offer up a dusty, sweat of the brow slice of American life and history, as well as introspective songs about his life and all that encapsulates the human experience. There is poetry to Bill's music, and it carries over into what he writes as well. Since he has just released two great recordings, *Drifter Songs WPA Volume 9* and *Ti Jean - Hearts Crossing the Center Line*, I

thought it would be cool to get Bill to talk about the music and the inspiration behind what we hear. If you haven't already checked out Mallonee's new website, stop by and give it a look. Make sure to check out his band camp site as well where you can purchase (at seriously inexpensive prices) all of his recordings in every format available.

### DRIFTER SONGS – WPA VOLUME 9

This is the first batch of songs I've released since moving to Santa Fe, NM last September. Muriah and I had been homeless during a 9 week tour of the US last Summer. The southwest and high desert terrain we live in

has been inspiring. But never have we felt so displaced and uprooted, hence "Drifter Songs."

The road has always held a certain fascination and lure for me. When I was very young, I remember even then, sensing a deep unresolved melancholy in the universe every time my folks would saddle up an old Valiant station wagon, pile us kids in and take off for some destination. The play of light, speed and changing topography all lent themselves to a world that needed "filling in" with my imagination. What kind of town was this? Who worked in that diner over there? Who ate there daily? What sort of stories were told there?

And that old, abandoned farm house? How did it fall on hard times? What sort of ghosts and stories peopled it now? Things of wonder like that. All bathed in the golden light of day or the more lonely neon colors of the night.

Much later on, as a recording artist and touring musician, I began logging 180 shows a year, pushing record after record at the grass-roots level. A dingy club here, a crap-hole bar there, a late night diner, a Super 8 later on. A decade at that pace passed very quickly it seems. But I got to know America. It put real faces in the real places that previously, I had only known by my imagination. I heard (and overheard) all kinds of stories and tales; Sometimes it was news that called for rejoicing. Sometimes it was stories of heartbreak and woe that only a sympathetic ear and shoulder to cry on was all one could offer. America. She will surprise you with her resiliency.

So I chiseled these images and feelings in notebooks...and tried to sing about them in an honest, believable way. Because the folks who've been forced to walk a more crooked and rugged mile deserve your honor and respect. They are the "saints" who won't likely ever have a TV camera turned on them at the 6 o'clock news, but their quiet testimonials of hard work, perseverance, kindness, and goodwill are (I believe) what "make this world go 'round." That's what I saw, that's what I learned and that's what's here, on some level, in "Drifter Songs."

As a "band in a van," I think we felt an ever increasing gratitude that there was something or Some One anchoring our lil' ship to the good earth; an earth full of all its trials, betrayals and hardships. We soldiered on, and ramped up 15 albums in 10 years. We took in the scenery and the lives of the countless folks we played for. We made friends and sensed their goodwill. Now, as a solo artist, it seems even more poignant in these uncertain days. And uncertainty is the heart of a drifter.

As a songwriter, and student of American history, I began to see the ties and similarities with the heroes of older days who forged

their way across this county, made new towns, planted farms, fostered new businesses, raised families...and of course lost a great deal along the way. The losses of today's heroes are no less heavy than those endured by the good folks of yesteryear.

These 20 years have reinforced in me the notion that we are all living in the same skin. And that "doing the best one can do with what one has," might just be the walk we endeavor to walk distilled into a single sentence. It's "truth," yes, but not truth with the bull-horn of formulas. It was something possessing that Biblical "still, quiet voice." A faith lived one-(stumbling)-step-at-a-time. People's lives were living sermons saying that "you can be down, but not out" , "disappointed, but hopeful." Wounded and yet capable of "doing the right thing."

If the very essence of a drifter's life is uncertainty, then we are all drifter's in some sense. Until we find our home there's the day's living to do...and there's each other. And it seems to be that in that "factory of life," a heroism is born. An individual is refined, fired and steeled against all that is potentially sorrowful and unknown. I've seen such heroism with my own two eyes.

I've drifted almost all my life now. Town to town. Show to show. Song by song. (For a spell, I was unconsciously reaching for my house key to open the van, presumably because I felt more "at home out there" on the road than at my Athens residence.) Singing & songwriting. "It" is still a joy and sometimes a curse. And at some point you wonder if "it" chose you, as opposed to you choosing "it." So be it. Like the old saying goes: "You do your best with what life gives you to do it with."

And (of course) pray for more grace for tomorrow. That's what the road and the good folks I've met taught me.

America. It's people. The very best part of her. They are still the most inspiring group of folks I've ever known.

Bill Mallonee  
Santa Fe, NM  
January, 2011

**"Ti Jean" (Hearts Crossing the Center Line)**  
**11 Songs inspired by the writings of Jack Kerouac** By: Bill Mallonee

#### OVERVIEW:

Jean-Louis "Jack" Kerouac (March 12, 1922 – October 21, 1969) was a Canadian-American novelist and poet. He is considered a pioneer of "Beat Generation" literature. Kerouac is recognized for his spontaneous, sensual, fractured method of writing covering topics such as Catholic spirituality, jazz, promiscuity, Buddhism, drugs, poverty, and travel. The "Beats" were a culture of post-war (WW II) American youth, highly educated but increasingly disillusioned. They began to find less and less in common with an America that was plunging into secularism and industrialization. The "Beats" valued literature (both old and new), jazz music, super-charged experiences and friendships.

Kerouac believed in a deeper innocence of post-war America and its people that was in danger of being lost. Often misunderstood and even misappropriated by his peers, Kerouac considered himself a "religious" writer. He was a seeker searching for contact with permanence & transcendence. He never lost his love for his French/Catholic roots.

Often playing the sociologist, Kerouac, with the preciseness of an "outsider," challenged post-war America to assess its values, its goals and even its lack of spiritual focus. He died at age 47 of complications due to alcoholism.

#### AND NOW, A WARNING:

*Before I speak briefly of my attraction (and sometimes revulsion) to Kerouac's work, I would like to first offer, a note of warning to Down the Line Zine readers should they take it upon themselves to delve into Kerouac's works:*

*Jack Kerouac, although heralded perhaps as the*

*most influential writer of the 20th century, can be dangerous waters for readers. He labored in obscurity over a period of almost 12 years during which time he wrote almost all his books, before finally being recognized as a writer of great passion, innovation and "coolness." (His friend, poet Allen Ginsberg helped bring Kerouac to national attention). He wrote in a very personal, journalistic fashion.*

*While he always attempted to describe an ennobled America with reverence and tenderness and his place in it, much of his early life and writing was characterized by a love for experiences ranging from many sexual encounters to alcohol abuse. Yet, in many of his works (especially the "middle" period) the reader will sense a strong religious impulse & element. (Kerouac embraced a Buddhist lifestyle for a time and later in life, the Catholicism of his youth). His work and life were highly charged & controversial in every sense of the word.*

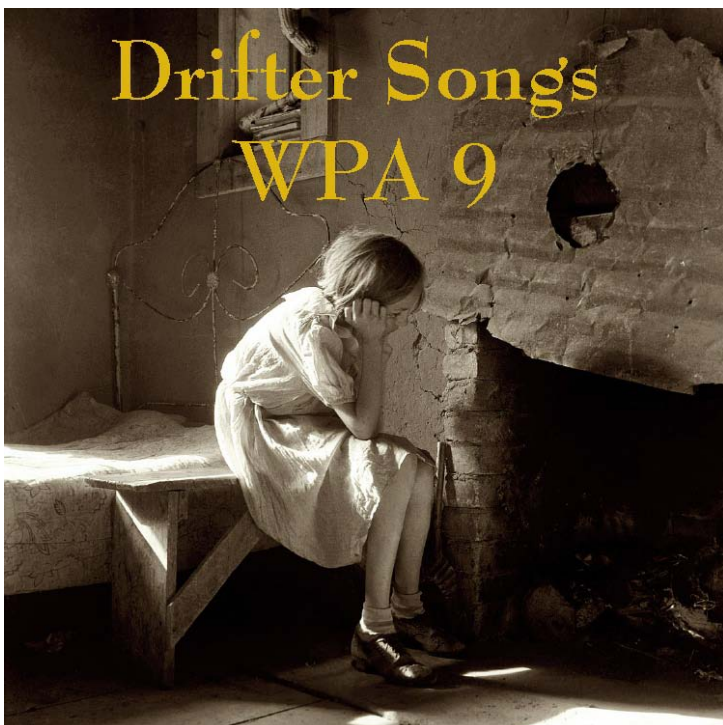
*Kerouac possessed a mind both brilliant and tragic. Brilliant because he was so well self-educated, using his wide ranging knowledge to forge a new way with words both in novels and in his poetry that has left a lasting impact on everything in our culture from literature, to music, to oratory, even to advertising.*

*And sadly tragic, because his lifestyle of sexual misconduct, misogynistic tendencies and his frequent tendency to self-medicate his doubts and depressive states with alcohol, pot, and Benzedrine, left him wasted of his brilliant powers. These contributed to his death at age 47, on Oct. 21st, 1969. And so reader, beware. Kerouac is a writer of myriad approaches. Tender and insightful, romantic and callously sensual, charitable and then alternately selfish, frustrating and exhilarating.*

#### WHY JACK KEROUAC?

My fascination with and attraction to JK's work began after reading a short bio on him by British poet, Steve Turner. Turner's "Angel Headed Hipster" attempted to reassess the role of faith and religion in Kerouac's life. Kerouac's tenderly appreciated a part of America that he thought was vanishing. He bemoaned that which was being lost to mass industrialization, suburbanization and the corporate takeover that began to dominate a person's private life. He dreaded the impersonal in daily life.

His writing is deeply "immediate," transparently personal and journalistic. He gleaned many of his experiences for his books from hitch hiking across the US with only a backpack, some notebooks and a few personal belongings. Life on the road was the crucible for his thoughts and experiences. No doubt, in my own work as a touring songwriter, I have found the road to be a necessary incubator for my songs.





In his middle years, Kerouac began to describe himself as a religious writer. Still, even though he continued to perfect and employ his distinctive "beat generation" style of rhythmic words, fractured images, and stream-of-consciousness, he did not part with his emphasis on experiences. (Later attempts to live by a self-imposed code of abstinence in regards to alcohol, drugs and sex seem to have been spotty in their success at best.)

Kerouac's forging of a new language to help him describe and tap into the "God-ness" he felt was within each person bears strong resemblance to much Catholic natural theology. He could be brutally honest at times with himself and just as much living in denial the next, engaging in escapist behavior such as abuse of alcohol or casual sex. Here was a man, a seeker, struggling to find himself in God or God in himself. Many books (particularly *Vision of Gerard*, *Desolation Angels*, *Dharma Bums* and *Tristessa*) are punctuated with prayers to Christ. Kerouac's heart seems to have been one of chronic yearning to realize or find himself realized) in a way that was personal and meaningful. To me, these cries and yearnings and insights, echoed the deepest desires of all those who ever sought mercy and friendship with their Creator.

Often, it seems, at least to this songwriter, that his friends were the worst influences. They recognized his genius but failed to see his deeper needs. His starvation of spiritual reality eventually saw him returning to the Catholicism of his youth. He spent his last years in his hometown of Lowell, MA caring for his mother, Gabrielle, a devout Catholic. (It was she who nicknamed Jack "Ti Jean" at an early age.) She maintained strong ties with Jack throughout her life and he with her.

#### ABOUT THIS RECORD:

Except for *"HARD LUCK AND HEART ATTACK,"* all of these tunes were written over the last 3 years. As I said, Jack's writing is deeply personal and journalistic. I began to keep road journals when touring with VoL around 1994.

*"HARD LUCK & HEART ATTACK,"* the intro song, was inspired by Kerouac's work entitled *"Desolation Angels."* It was the first "Kerouac tune" I wrote and appeared on 1999's *Audible Sigh*. It opens with Jack atop Mount Desolation in Washington State, where he took a job doing fire watches for the U.S. Forestry Services. The book (and song) touch on his self destructive lifestyle, trips to San Francisco to hang with his friends, and his excursions to Mexico City to visit his friend a "beat writer," William S. Burroughs. (Thoughts on his relationship to W. S. Burroughs are continued in the song/hymn *"All the Junkies & Exiles."*)

Above all, on this album, I wanted to highlight Kerouac's reverent belief in the potential nobility of the American spirit, his tender way

of seeing people, and his hunger for spirituality reality. Because of my work on the road as a touring and performing songwriter, I have identified a great deal with much of his rendition of the displaced artist, in search of a home here and in eternity. Therefore, I think all these songs are imbued with a certain spirit found in Jack Kerouac's writings.

A few summers ago, I went to his birthplace, Lowell, MA. I saw (and read some of) the "On The Road" manuscript, toured the Kerouac museum, spoke with the staff there. Visitors were invited to type a message to Jack on an old Underwood there at the museum. I quoted the first two lines from this song and addressed it to "Ti Jean," (Little John) Jack's mother's term of endearment for her son.

"Things clear for a moment, when you're coming off Desolation; 'Frisco's you're appointment...just the way you were before."  
-Pax, Ti Jean"

Tenderness was one of Kerouac's overlooked qualities, I believe. It is my hope that by listening to these songs, some of that virtue of his tender spirit might be restored to his legacy.

Bill Mallonee  
Santa Fe, NM Jan. 2011

#### Musician credits:

"Ti Jean" Hearts Crossing the Center Line was released 14 January 2011 at:

[billmalloneemusic.bandcamp.com](http://billmalloneemusic.bandcamp.com)

#### Personnel on:

"Buddha," "Skin Intact," "All the Junkies & Exiles," "When Your Heart Gets Broken (It Just Keeps on Breaking)," "Bakersfield," "Western Skies," "Going Down," "Pillow of Stars," & "Nomenclature"

Bill Mallonee: vocals, guitars, bass drums on  
Muriah Rose; vocals, keyboards

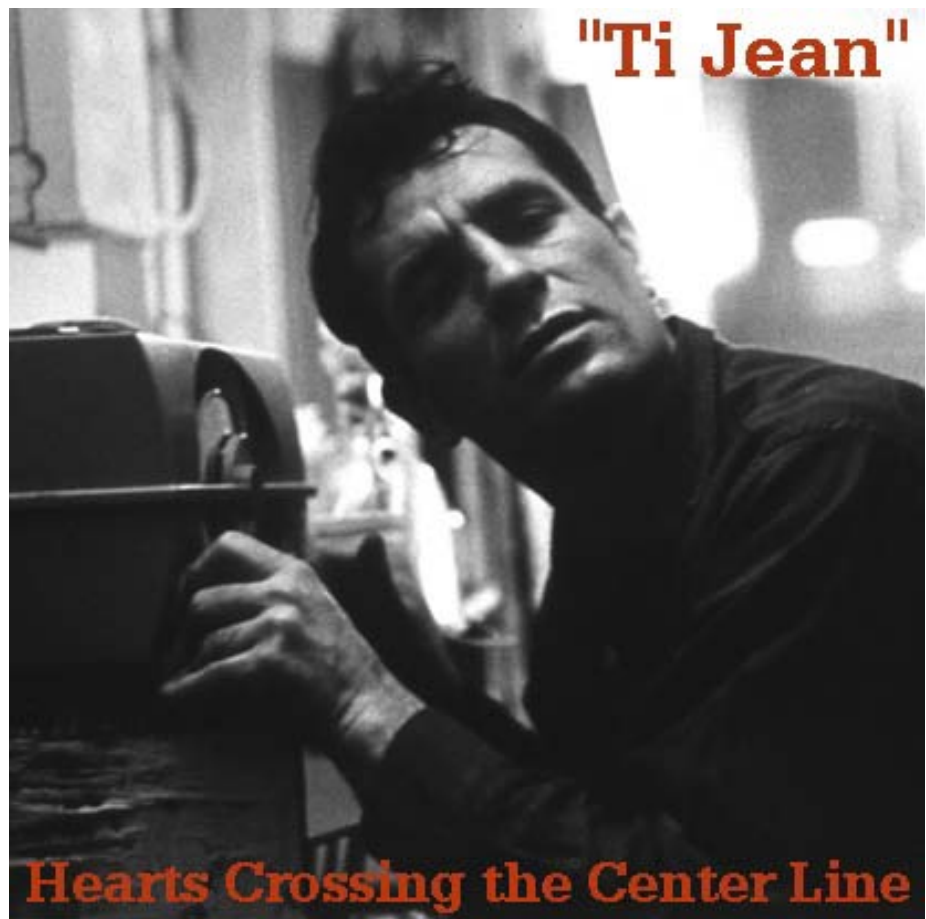
#### Personnel on SOBER UP:

Bill Mallonee: vocals, guitars  
Muriah Rose: vocals, keyboards  
Seth Hendershot; drums, smiles  
Robbie: bass  
(produced by Tom Lewis & Bill Mallonee)

#### personnel on "HARD LUCK & HEART ATTACK"

(produced by: Buddy Miller & Bill Mallonee)  
Bill Mallonee; Vocals, guitars, harmonica  
Ken Hutson: guitar, bgv's  
Jake Bradley: Bass  
Brady Blade: drums

<http://billmalloneemusic.bandcamp.com>





# BRIAN “STERLING” KIRSCH [part 3]

Interview by Steve Ruff

This was the last interview that we did with Sterling. It was the Part 3 of a lengthy article and the culmination of several hours of conversation. This last installment is much shorter than the previous offerings, but it was kind of the wrap up to all that we had spoken about. At the end of the article read what he have as the rules for a very cool contest with an absolute one of a kind prize. This has been cool to do with Sterling and to watch him on a journey that he has put much thought, many tears and plenty of questions into. C.S. Lewis once said that, “Faith is never doubt free.” That statement has been one of those lines that has been a cornerstone in my life and a great equalizer in so many areas. Thanks again to Sterling for being so honest and filling in the blanks about where he has been, what he has been doing, and for shedding some light on Veil of Ashes and so much that they encountered.

**I know it’s kind of personal, but coming through the holidays and around this time of year, how are you coping with the loss of your girlfriend?**

It’s still a bummer, it doesn’t really bother me as much as it used to...but every now and then I just kind of feel like, “Oh crap,” but what are you gonna do ya know? I’m going to

be 49 in January and my prospects aren’t looking too good at this point, especially when I’m working a job to just pay the bills.

**Tell me again how long it has been.**

It was two years ago October 1<sup>st</sup>...

**I know a lot of people get kind of down around the holidays anyway, and I was just wondering how you deal with this season and how you get through it.**

Well, I’ve said before... I wouldn’t say I’m morose, but like when I was a kid I was so shy and introverted that I wouldn’t talk to people. My mom would make me go up to a clerk in the grocery store and ask where items were, just to get me to talk to somebody. Basically it was rock ‘n roll that took me out of that. I’m still a little depressive, but that’s just my nature though.

**For other people that are reading and possibly going through the same thing, how do you deal with something as dramatic as losing a loved one, or losing a loved one to suicide?**

You just get through it... I mean I told you I lost my girlfriend, then about a month later I lost my job, then I had to move out of where I was living and I moved back in with my family. I basically didn’t leave my room for the next four to six months. I went out and did stuff every once in awhile, but basically stayed at home.

**Was it good to have your family around?**

Yeah, but we’re the kind of family that doesn’t really talk about stuff or talk stuff out. We like each other, we love each other and my Mom was there for me, but she knows I’m not much of a talker. When it comes to really emotional stuff I usually will keep it pretty much close to the vest. I can’t say that I had any mind shattering revelations on how I got through it or anything like that, it was just one foot in front of the other man.

**With Veil, if you had to go back and do it over again, would you change anything?**

That’s a good question... I would change some of my attitudes.

**How?**

Well sometimes I had a bad attitude about things. A lot of the times after shows me and my girlfriend and my roadie were loading up my truck with gear and getting everything together... everyone called me “dad” you know, I was always trying to corral the kittens. Not so much because I was a control freak, but because I wanted things done, and I would get pretty upset when people would disappear when we were supposed to be doing sound check, just stuff like that.

Another thing is that I wouldn’t have gotten rid of Lance Harris, the first guitarist. There were just some personality conflicts there, but I wouldn’t have done it that way now. Also, the songs are pretty good but I think I would have taken a little more time on some of the arrangements I think.

**In regards to you and searching out your faith, where are you in that journey?**

Well I’m thinking of going back to church possibly and probably if I do that will go to something with a little more structure like a Lutheran church, I think that would be good for me.

**I know last time we talked you thought you were headed away from Agnosticism, still feel that way?**

Yeah, yeah I feel I’ve definitely moved away from that. I still have questions and I still wonder whether someone else’s religion or faith is wrong just because it’s not Christianity, and I don’t like to see people get pushed aside because of their beliefs. You can’t do that to people, it is what they believe, especially for people who live in other countries and cultures. You can’t downgrade people’s beliefs simply because you don’t agree with them, all that does it put a wedge between people.

**Is there anything else that you want to talk about, anything that you want to add?**

There are probably some things you could ask me that you are probably wondering about, you want to take a shot in the dark and ask, go ahead.

**Is there something you want to say?**

Well, one thing that people don’t know... while we were recording *Mr. Sunshine* one of the things that helped put an end to Veil of Ashes was that my girlfriend and I had broken up. She had been talking to other guys in the band and kind of the last person to know was me... and that was really hard. After that happened Jeremy killed himself and after his death everyone in the band kind of moved out to different parts of the Bay Area. There was a lot of conflict, not conflict in the band, but conflict towards the band and I could really see in a lot of different ways things starting to fall apart.

**What happened to Jeremy?**

Okay, Jeremy Hawley... First all, Phil Meads is one of the most incredible drummers I’ve ever worked with, he was Veil’s original drummer. He could take the beats so close to being outside of the time signatures and bring it back in, he was the Keith Moon of Christian rock as far as I’m concerned. Jeremy was a great drummer. He was a kid, he was 20 when he joined the band and he was a very

depressed kid. He grew up in a Christian family but was sexually abused by a relative. When that happened to him they took him to a Christian psychologist, or therapist, and basically all he was told was that he needed to get right with God that there was nothing wrong with him... bad advice. So he was carrying all that around with him and no one really knew about it. I was the last one to see him alive. We were at a club together that was having a "goth night" and we left there and drove back over to his house across the bay where we were just watching Bauhaus and Tones on Tail videos, and then after a while I left. I guess what happened was that a few weeks before we had played a showcase for Hollywood Records, and Jeremy's girlfriend had come up from college on break to see him. They were supposed to be getting married and she basically told him she had decided she wasn't going to marry him, he was just an immature musician and she really just cut him up. I didn't even know about that... but after I got back home I gave him a call and he had left this really weird answer on the machine. I told Sean to keep calling him until I got back down there, and by the time I made it back, Jeremy's dad told me that he had hung himself. It was really hard.

**So at that point things were really starting to unwind to a degree?**

You know I said before I am a little depressive, and prior to the band ever getting together I had been engaged to a different girl that had broken up with me and I lived through a tough depression for about a year. I never realized how much a person can hurt physically from depression. So after 1992 when everything was falling apart I got depressed again and started doing drugs again. I hadn't done any drugs since I had been about 18 or 19 years old, but I started smoking crack. It just felt like the sky was lead, nothing was going up and everything around me was falling apart and dying.

I was smoking crack for about 6 months and realized I really had a problem because I couldn't stop. I was making about \$1000 a week working construction but I was barely paying my rent, putting a little gas in the car, maybe eating, and spending everything else on crack. After about 6 months of that I talked to Sean and he basically said, "Okay, we won't say anything to the band about this, but you need to get your sh\*t together." That was all we ever said about it...we probably should have talked and followed up on it but we didn't. Then a week before Christmas in '92 I got busted by the cops in Oakland trying to score and ended up spending a week in Oakland city jail with 84 other guys in the same big cell. It was like a boarding room.

After all that I went through drug court and an intensive drug program in California and I got clean. It was rough though, because after that I was basically on suspension or kicked out of

the band for six months until I got my stuff together, but the thing was that while we were recording Mr. Sunshine I was doing drugs. That had a lot to do with killing the band too, probably more than anyone will admit. I did get out of it and get clean, it batted me around a couple more times through the years, but I'm alright, I made it through it.

**Wow, that's a lot that has gone on and a lot that has happened. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I want to thank everyone who likes Veil so much. Still hearing to this day how people took us into their hearts is really gratifying. It's like a little band that meant something to a lot of people and touched their lives in some way, and that is still going on today which is unbelievable, but very cool.

## CONTEST RULES:

This one is easy. If you are a fan of Veil of Ashes and one of their friends on face book, pop on over to Down The Line's face book page and become one of our friends. Post on our wall why you should be the one to win. It is that easy... we will pick a winner at random and contact you through face book. The prize you ask...? The original artwork to *The Young and the Reckless: The Regression of Veil Of Ashes*. When I say original, I mean the only one that exists, signed by the artist and looking for a good home.

Veil of Ashes page:

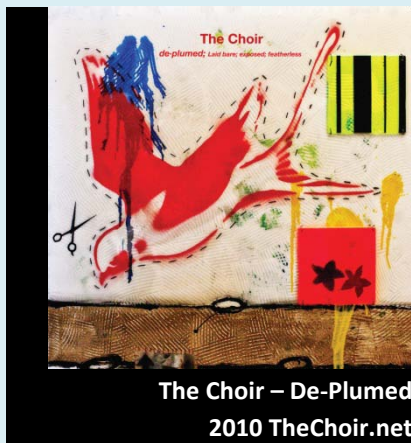
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/VEIL-OF-ASHES/354542937541>

Down the Line page:

<http://www.facebook.com/DownTheLineZine>







The Choir strikes gold again. This surprise release was the second in 2010 for the guys in The Choir. It was not only eagerly welcomed by fans, but it is unlike anything you have ever heard The Choir guys do. I was surprised because not only is this a stripped down acoustic Choir offering, they also revisit songs from previous albums – which is unusual for them. Normally I'm not a big fan of bands taking songs from prior albums, doing them acoustically and packaging a new disc... BUT, this is very different from anything else of that nature. They didn't just sing through these songs with an acoustic guitar, Hindalong still handles a well favored and minimal approach to the percussion, and they have also added Matt Slocum on the cello which really embodies the richness of the acoustic melancholy of these songs. Another nice touch is that they used Ron Lyon for the artwork again, as they had done previously on *Burning Like the Midnight Sun*. This has quickly become one of my favorite Choir releases, it is a must have for your collection.

– Steve Ruff



The new album by Aradhna, *Namaste Sate*, is a work of beauty. Everything from the photography to the videos to the music comes together in one awe-inspiring package. How appropriate, since Aradhna means "worship."

For those unfamiliar with Aradhna, they are an original mix of Hindi language, English language, rock music, Indian music, guitar, sitar, and many other English and Indian influences. They successfully remove Jesus from the white churchianity-dominated mindset of so many Americans and skillfully introduce him into an Indian mindset. But don't worry if you aren't fluent in Hindi – lyrical translations are always a part of the liner notes for every Aradhna release. Even if you take away the translations, it would be hard to not get caught up in the mood of each song. Early Aradhna albums seemed to have more distinct lines between the rock parts and the mellow parts. On *Namasate Sate*, these lines are nearly gone – songs seamlessly transform from floating and acoustic to intense and electric and back again. This lends a more mature edge to the overall project. The swelling and subsiding of the music reminds me of walking along the streets of India in many ways – one moment you are in a quiet neighborhood where it seem like time is standing still, then you hear the loud street growing closer, then you are in the midst of a sea of people – caught up in the rush but not feeling any pressure to get anywhere. You just enjoy the ride. Which is exactly what I do with every listen of Aradhna.

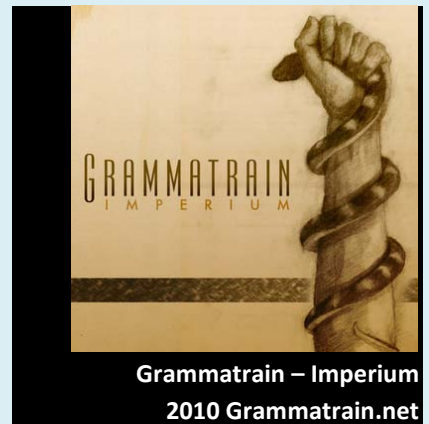
– Matt Crosslin



Been waiting along time for this one – the bands third full length – worth the wait. Epic melodic Punk Rock, great production, layered vocal harmonies, technical guitar parts, drummer is always amazing, all that you'd expect from these guys by now. Still have the Bad Religion meets Lagwagon vibe, but lyrically way more heart on the sleeve than the aforementioned bands. Craig's Brothers lyrics are always cut deep in the heart, songs of loss, betrayal, let downs, life's stresses, if you are a caring person you can relate to what Ted Bond writes about in such a poetic fashion. I like every song on the album, heck,

I've liked every song I've ever heard from CB. Man, I really missed this band and am so glad to have them back! Let's hope the next one doesn't take so long to come out.

– Josh Lory



Grammatrain returns with their first full album in years. They still sound like Grammatrain – no attempts have been made to adopt a new style. That's not to say this is a re-hash of their first two albums. There is definitely a good amount of growth when comparing these songs to older material. To me, the songs seem to be a bit more plodding than in the past – fewer borderline punk songs than on *Flying* or *Lonely House*. Not that this is a bad thing – they still have some great riffs going on here. The spiritual dynamic is also interesting, as lead singer Pete Stewart recently said he is no longer a Christian, but tries to write songs that would not offend the Roraback brothers.

– Matt Crosslin



The fine folks are Intense Millennium Records have re-mastered and re-released this landmark Christian metal record. In the late 80's when hair metal was the rage, Bloodgood drops this second release and makes a name for themselves. If you remember these guys when they were first around, they looked more like a hair metal band, complete with doofy spandex gear and big hair. In actuality

they were merging the sound of traditional metal with a fairly heavy influence of thrash/speed metal guitar work. Michael Bloodgood and company really paved the way for more acceptance of thrash bands to come. The music can best be compared to Judas Priest, maybe even Iron Maiden, but Bloodgood was something new and fresh to the Christian metal market. Les Carlsen's vocals could hit the high notes and carry a rapid pace. David Zaffiro's guitar work was one of a kind, full of solos and sharp guitar work, he led the charge and brought a speed and depth into the genre that was new and needed. This release comes complete with two bonus live tracks that showcase the tightness of the band playing live. These guys are still going and still making news with a induction into the Christian Music Hall of Fame in 2010. ([bloodgoodband.com](http://bloodgoodband.com))

— Steve Ruff



**Vengeance Rising – Human Sacrifice**  
2010 IntenseMillennium.com

Vengeance Rising... what can I say? This first release was the definitive Christian thrash record of its time. Originally released in 1988, everything about this record caused a stir. People complained about lead singer Roger Martinez's voice, they complained about the album art, song titles, record title etc. etc. etc. Even with all the finger pointing, name calling and griping, Human Sacrifice put the metal world on notice. There were huge riffs, throbbing bass lines, guttural vocals and pummeling drums. There wasn't anything else like this in Christian metal, and Vengeance (before they added Rising to their name) blew the doors off and could easily hold pace with any of their contemporaries in the thrash world like Megadeth, Slayer and early Metallica. It was a breath of fresh air for metal, and it was a genre defining release that other bands would always be compared to. The cool thing about the re-release is the addition of several bonus tracks and an interview with former original vocalist Roger Martinez. The re-mastering really helps the clarity to come through as well, and it lends

itself to really making this album crisp, concise and heavy, heavy, heavy! This new re-release also comes with new artwork and a new booklet/insert to boot. Thanks to Intense Millennium for making this available. If you haven't ever listened to Vengeance Rising this is the best way to get started. Even if you own the first release (I still have the cassette), grab this one because the re-mastering gives new life to this album. HM Magazine also ranked this debut as the #1 metal release ever. Christian thrash...come listen and see where it all began.

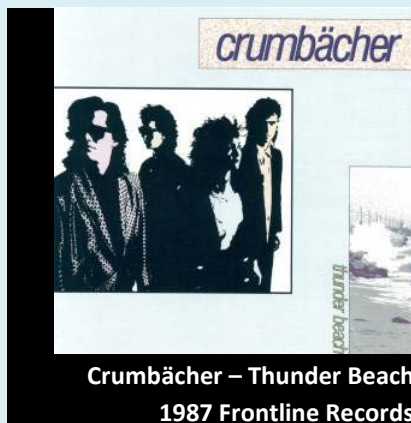
— Steve Ruff



**Bloodgood – Bloodgood**  
2010 IntenseMillennium.com

Bloodgood's classic debut album gets the re-issue treatment from Intense Millennium Records. The sound is classic metal – a little power, a little melodic, but all shred. The only real problem when it was first released was the limited recording budget. Now that has been fixed with a nice re-mastering job that really helps these songs shine. Two bonus tracks were also added – basically alternate versions of other songs on the album. They also fixed the original's odd "I kinda get it but kinda don't" cover art. A quality album all the way around.

— Matt Crosslin



**Crumbächer – Thunder Beach**  
1987 Frontline Records

I chose to review this Crumbächer disc, but it should be noted that Escape From the Fallen

*Planet* should be re-mastered and available by the time you read this. I wanted to cover *Thunder Beach* simply because although it might not be their most popular piece of work, it was the first Christian album that I got when I was growing up. I still remember my aunt purchased *Thunder Beach* for me as a Christmas present. I also got some Twila Paris cassette at the same time (woe is me!). Anyway, I love the packaging on this disc, the silhouetted outlines of the band members are really cool. This is one of the best pop discs that came out at the time. This release saw the band progress away from the synth pop sound and incorporate a more pop rock feel with edgier tracks like "Once In A Heartbreak" and the title track "Thunder Beach". There are also straight up pop tracks here that are a lot of fun, an instrumental track and a couple of ballads thrown in for good measure. I've never been a big fan of ballads, but I absolutely love "Tough Act To Follow", the words are timeless and the sentiment is deep. Check out iTunes for this release!

— Steve Ruff



**Sacred Warrior - Rebellion**  
2010 IntenseMillennium.com

Sacred Warrior was one of the first Christian bands to take on the progressive metal genre pioneered by Queensryche. They are not copycats by any means, but fans of simple riff rock might want to look elsewhere. You probably already know the album – so let's talk about the re-issue. The sound is vastly improved from the original – almost to the point of making you feel like you are listening for the first time. The two bonus tracks are unreleased demos. And top that all off with some great new artwork. I can't say I have loved all of the recent front cover upgrades, but this one is much better than the original. The original was a cool concept, but just probably suffered from picking the wrong live picture. The new cover is a bit gothic, but it looks great. Another quality re-issue from Intense Millennium.

— Matt Crosslin





**Luxury – Health And Sport**  
2005 NorthernRecords.com

Luxury's 2005 release starts out soothing, warming and softly engaging... with minimal guitar, cymbal and drum work. Lee Bozeman's vocals come into play and that distinct Luxury vibe takes over. The distortion bleeds in with a soft and casual stream and the vocals accent the sounds that permeate my listening space. Luxury is a one-of-a-kind band with a very distinct sound that draws on different elements of post punk and shoe gaze genres, definitely know that when listening to these guys they turn distortion into a beautiful sound. Northern released this record a few years back and I think it is probably their best effort. It's one of those records that I can't find any fault with, I love the drums, guitar work, the vocals, percussion, piano, everything about this disc screams quality and the band elicits a broad range of emotion throughout the entire disc. I give this one two thumbs up, check it out and purchase a copy if you haven't already.

– Steve Ruff

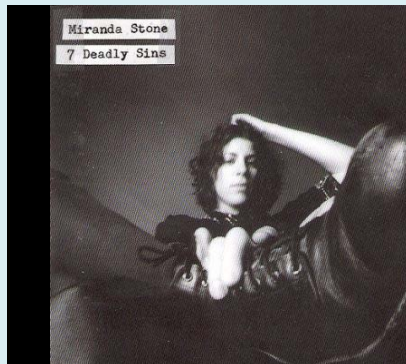


**McAllister – Strong Tower**  
2007 TimMcAllister.com

Tim McAllister originally made a name for himself as the leader of Flock 14 and then World Theatre. *Strong Tower* has obviously been out for a while, but I recently discovered that you can download a version of it for free from his site. I say "a version" because there is an expanded version of the physical CD for

sale. You can check out the album for yourself – but why would you even bother? If you like edgy, guitar-based alternative rock, you will love this. It is not loud or aggressive, but very enjoyable. I keep coming back to the song "Million," but I can also listen to the whole thing from start to finish. I have also read that Linford Detweiler of Over The Rhine makes a guest appearance.

– Matt Crosslin



**Miranda Stone – 7 Deadly Sins**  
2002 MirandaStone.com

I know the date shows that this album has been out for nearly 10 years, but I am just now discovering it. Miranda is married to Aradhna sitar player Chris Hale. So as a fan of Aradhna, I figured I should check this album out. I am glad I did. This is not pop-y wanna be folk – Miranda has grit and a bite that sets her apart from the crowd. She is also backed by a full band. The grit is not only in the music but also the lyrics – some great ideas to chew on here. Miranda also has a powerful set of pipes that fits the music perfectly. The only problem I have with this album is that it is the last solo album she recorded. There is another full length and ep before this one that I am hunting down – but we need to hear more!

– Matt Crosslin



**Mumble – Happy Living**  
2010 netads.com/music/marathon/mumble

I'll be honest when reviewing this and tell you that I had to listen a couple of times before I

got into this release. Maybe it's because the music is way more complex than I originally thought. These five guys hail from Michigan and put out a powerhouse of what I can only describe as indie pop. Produced by Jeff Elbel of Ping and Farewell To Juliet, this disc is actually quite fun. Upon first listen I thought it sounded somewhere along the lines of Brian May playing guitar for The Beatles. It has a grown up indie drive with a pop sensibility and thrill. The lyrics are really good and tell unique snapshots with a storyteller's rhyme. The music and arrangements are really unique and out of the norm. Definite feel good, roll down the window on a sunny day music. Check them out and give it a go!

– Steve Ruff



**Vengeance Rising – Once Dead**  
2010 IntenseMillennium.com

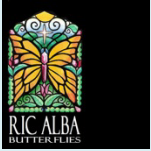
Where *Human Sacrifice* introduced this band to the market, *Once Dead* solidified their place in the Christian metal world. Kicking off this record with an eerie recital of the The Lord's Prayer, Vengeance Rising stormed back into the scene with a fury and a (ahem) vengeance. This release continues down the path that these guys started, but this offering is more mature, more concise and much tighter than its predecessor. Unfortunately this would be the last record with the original line-up, but the band gave us something memorable. With even meaner and faster riffs, sharp and crisp guitar solos, the band sounded even better than before. Staying true to form this release was also very Biblically based lyrically, controversial, but ultimately uplifting. The guys at Intense Millennium Records have done a tremendous job with the re-mastering and re-packaging of this classic record. There are an additional 4 bonus tracks released with this re-packaging disc as well. *Once Dead* hits the groove and doesn't let up for almost a solid hour. Vengeance Rising's legacy is well documented and well deserved, don't let Roger Martinez's leaving the band overshadow how great this band truly was. They blazed a trail and lit a torch!

– Steve Ruff



## SHORT SHOTS

Many bands today are opting to release singles, eps, and one-off songs online instead of recording whole albums. Here are our reviews of these random length musical endeavors.



### Ric Alba – Butterfly | 2011 iTunes

Ric Alba released this single track a couple of months ago and it flows perfectly as if he never stopped making music. This could have easily fit on *Holes In the Floor of Heaven*. It sounds remarkable in its degree of emotion and the depth of what he is trying to communicate. One of the things that has always been so satisfying to me about Alba's solo work is his ability to not only communicate the complexity of emotion that he is conveying through his lyrics, but also through the music itself. He does that on "Butterfly" as well. The music sounds immediate, the piano brings a fresh urgency to what he is saying and the lyrics are familiar in theme and in Ric's style of writing. One of my favorite lines is:

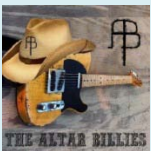
"How many hearts, no one knows  
Are buried under streets of gold  
No one asks, no one told  
And I had no other place to go"

Ric's music is consistently touching and compelling. It becomes a mirror that we hold and look back at ourselves. Ric was inspired to write a song after Brian Healy shared the Lonnie Frisbee documentary with him. This is part of what Ric said to me, "This isn't just a song about being gay and closeted---not by any stretch. It's about having wonderful, special, or unique qualities of any kind that we hide, or feel pressured to hide, so that we fit in. What the documentary inspired in me was that some of us, hopefully most of us, find our way to let our wings fly open and without shame, whether we realize it or not. Lonnie did it with his charismatic ministry, maybe I kinda did it a little in the context of Altar Boys and *Holes*. Everybody can probably site one way or another how they broke out of their caterpillar drag from time to time." For those wondering where to get this, you can just swing over to iTunes and purchase this track. – *Steve Ruff*



### Sungrazerr – I Don't Need A Lot of Love...Just A Steady Supply | 2010 SubdivisionTheory.com

Sungrazerr has released three more tracks of sonic brilliance. This little E.P. is titled *I Don't Need A Lot of Love, Just A Steady Supply*. The first track up is "They Listen" with a hearty dose of tense and vague wondering as we listen to the fuzzed out communications of what appears to be air controllers in communication with someone reporting a UFO sighting. Whatever it is, it sounds best through the headphones and is a great track to ease into the new recording. Up next is the song, "de respirer dans", which is French for "breathe in" and the layering of this track is absolutely beautiful. The music seems to be climbing and descending at the same time, all while carrying on this softly distorted ambience of ebb and flow...stunning indeed! Track three is "Alligators," and this one clocks in at a fuzzy 6 minutes and 11 seconds. I love this music and this band, it's like listening to a landscape in another world, good news is there is more to come soon! – *Steve Ruff*



### The Altar Billies – The Altar Billies | 2010 facebook.com/altarbillies

This really actually is a full 11 song CD, but fits more in with the eps because it is only 5 recorded songs and then six live/instrumental versions of those same songs. It is also very economically priced wherever you get it. The production is a little bit on the DIY side, but that is understandable. What you have here are classic songs by The Altar Boys covered in rockabilly style. It is as fun as it sounds. Putting these songs in a different format helps to showcase just how great the songwriting was in The Altar Boys. – *Matt Crosslin*



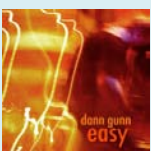
### Upside Down Room – TV Baby (re-issue) | 2010 PopVoxMusic.com

Upside Down Room's long out of print ep is back. I missed this the first time around and it has been virtually impossible to find up until now. The new version has been re-mastered with two bonus tracks added along with updated artwork. I'm not sure where the bonus tracks are from, but they sound like they could have been recorded in the same session. Upside Down Room always stuck with their biker punk sound as a core, but each release saw them grow and stretch a bit. A great album that I am glad to see back. – *Matt Crosslin*



### Trip Wamsley and Steve Lawson – Infralab | 2010 tripwamsley.bandcamp.com

As a former bass guitar player myself (no time now!), I have followed Trip Wamsley for a while. At one point, he was somehow connected to Caedmon's Call – but if that is a bad thing to you, don't worry. Trip's music is spaced out bass jams that even non-bass players love. I can't tell you how many people tell me they love Trip's music even though they hate instrumental albums of any kind. This ep has him teaming up with bassist Steve Lawson, and the results are cool, trippy, and awesome. – *Matt Crosslin*



### Dann Gunn – Easy | 2010 DannGunn.com

Dann Gunn, formerly of R.E.X. Recording artist Velocipede – is still active in music. This ep is his latest release. Dann is still loud and in your face, but a bit less rough around the edges. This also sounds a bit more industrial than past recordings. Dann has a strong voice that tends to set this music apart. Think powerful, well sung vocals over a bed of distortion. I keep coming back to the title song – it has a nice, driving rhythm and pace. Short but rockin' ep. – *Matt Crosslin*



*Untitled (2010)* by Rick McDonough